



Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in the U.S. with one in six children being overweight. The prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure has substantially increased in children over the past decade. As a result, Chartwells has introduced a comprehensive wellness program designed for your school district to address this current wave of childhood obesity and inactivity.

What is Balanced Choices?

- **Balanced Choices is Chartwells' program designed to identify "better-for-you" food choices.**
- **Balanced Choices promotes snacks, beverages and meals that meet precise nutrition parameters which endorse healthy eating guidelines and appropriate portion sizes.**
- **The Balanced Choices Program teaches students how to make healthy food choices while on the school campus as well as outside of school.**

Why Balanced Choices?

- **Increases the availability of healthy foods to students throughout the day.**
- **The prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure has substantially increased over the past decade.**
- **Only 3% of Americans choose the recommended number of servings from each food group.**
- **Children with unhealthy eating habits tend to maintain those habits into adulthood.**

How Does The Balanced Choices Program Work?

- **Foods that meet nutritional standards are identified on the serving line and in snack bars.**
- **Food eligible for the program can include snacks, beverages and meals**
- **Foods will be identified with labels, stickers and tags that contain the Balanced Choices logo.**

Snack Criteria

No more than 35% calories from fat

No more than 10% calories from saturated fat

No more than 35% sugar by weight (excluding fruits and vegetables).

No more than 480 mg sodium

No more than 200 calories

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Beverage Criteria

100% fruit and vegetable juice (limited to 12 oz portion size)

Fat free and 1% milk products (8 – 16 oz portion size)

Water and flavored water without added sugar (unlimited portion size)

Caffeine free (except for flavored milk)

Meals

- The Balanced Choices meals program is intended to be a *meal guidance system* for students to learn how to create nutritious meals.
- Some parents have expressed concern that because the meals' nutrient analysis is averaged over a week, some meals could be significantly higher in calories and fat. Meals are created so that there is not a drastic difference among each other with calories, fat, and other nutrients.
- All of the Balanced Choices meals have to meet certain nutritional parameters. These parameters are based on the science of good nutrition and various organizations including: U.S. Dietary Guidelines, Healthy US School Challenge, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association.
- The Balanced Choices meals were determined using computer nutrient analysis software.
- All of the meals that are served in the school cafeteria are healthy. A meal that is labeled as a Balanced Choices meal is like “super-nutrition.” It’s almost like taking a vitamin in your meal, but even better because the body absorbs vitamins and minerals coming from foods better than from a vitamin pill.

Balanced Choices Meal Parameters

Nutrients	K-6	7-12	Allowable Range per Meal
Calories	664	825	Plus or minus 10%
Protein (g)	10	16	Minimum allowable
Calcium (mg)	286	400	10% below, no upper limit
Iron (mg)	3.5	4.5	10% below, no upper limit
Vitamin A (RE)	224	300	10% below, no upper limit
Vitamin C (mg)	15	18	10% below, no upper limit
Fat (% of calories)	30%	30%	Maximum allowable
Saturated Fat (% of calories)	10%	10%	Maximum allowable
Fiber (g)	6	8	10% below, no upper limit
Cholesterol (mg)	100	100	No lower limit, 10% above
Sodium (mg)	1300	1300	Maximum allowable