



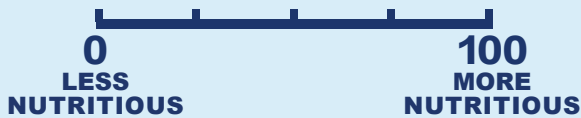
United States Department of Agriculture

School Meals Are More Nutritious After Updated Nutrition Standards



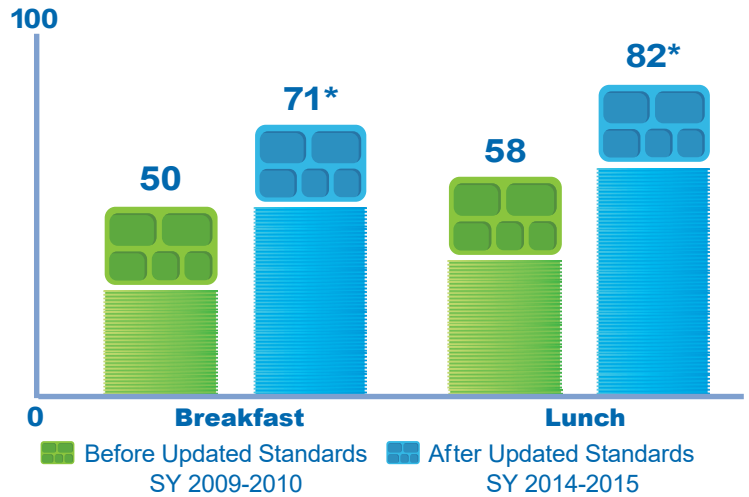
The Healthy Eating Index (HEI) assigns scores to meals based on how consistent they are with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Higher scores indicate higher nutritional quality.



The HEI includes a total score and separate scores for different components of a healthy diet.

Average Total HEI Scores of Schools Meals



The updated nutrition standards went into effect in school year (SY) 2012-2013.

*Difference between SY 2009-2010 and SY 2014-2015 is statistically significant.

HEI scores for components to encourage:

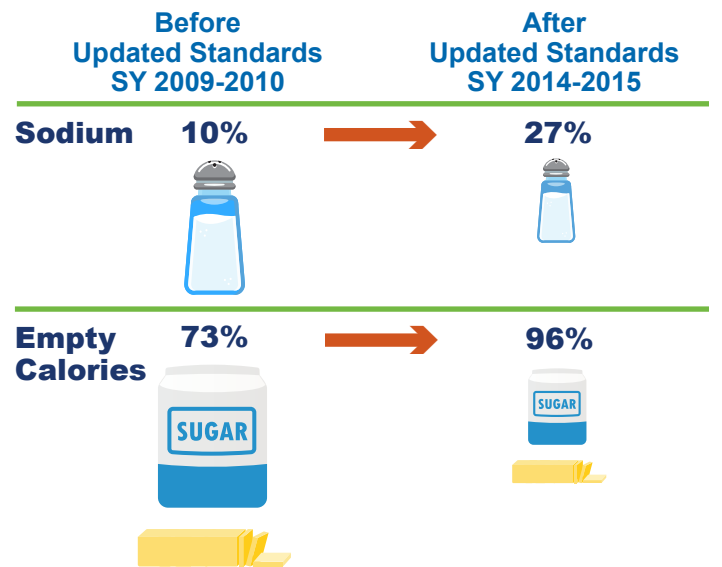
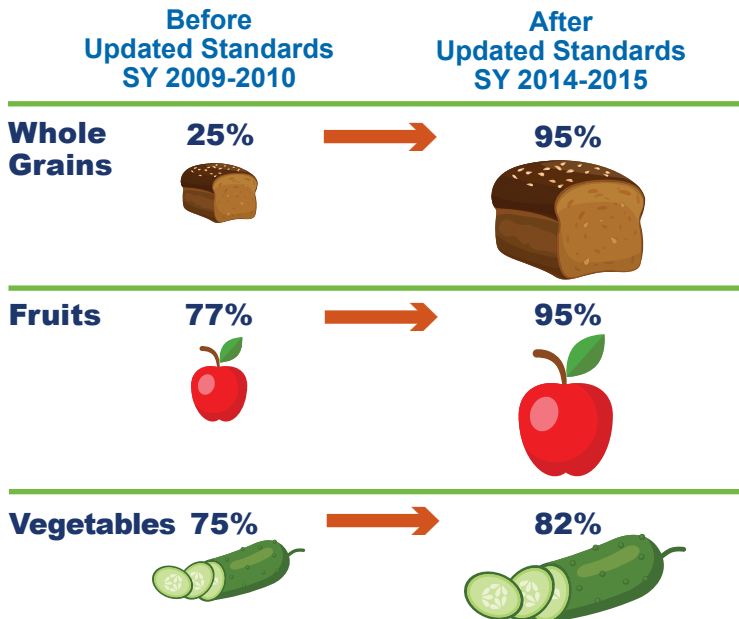
↑ scores = ↑ concentrations

HEI scores for components to limit:

↑ scores = ↓ concentrations

HEI COMPONENT SCORES FOR LUNCHES

(Expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible score)



Empty calories are calories from solid fats and added sugars.

All of the differences between SY 2009-2010 and SY 2014-2015 are statistically significant.

Findings are from the School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study, which was conducted by Mathematica. The study provides information about a broad array of topics, including the food and nutrient content of school meals, the costs of school meals, the food environments in schools, and the contribution of school meals to children's overall diets. Detailed reports, other infographics, webinars, and a video of key study findings are available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-nutrition-and-meal-cost-study>.

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