

## NUTRI-SERVE TIP OF THE WEEK

**By Kristen Mueller, RD (Nutri-Serve Corporate Dietitian)**

### **Making the most of the school lunch!**

USDA mandates that the school lunch contain 5 components:

1. Grain
2. Protein
3. Milk
4. Fruit
5. Vegetable

Nutri-Serve breaks the maximum vegetable and fruit portion sizes into 2 servings, allowing students to take 1 fruit and/or 1 vegetable (minimum serving) or 2 fruits and/or 2 vegetables (maximum serving)

The mindset in making the menu in this way is that students are encouraged to take one fruit or vegetable that they like and then try something new.

Plus this allows for variety in nutrition and flavor....Ex: *a portion of salad and a portion of baby carrots and dip vs a double portion of carrots and dip.*

USDA mandates that students must take a fruit or vegetable with the school lunch. Our strategy in breaking up the fruit and vegetable components has proved successful in increasing the number of students who are consuming a fruit and/or vegetable with the school lunch.

The 5 components of the school lunch can be a difficult concept to understand for our young customers. Our cashiers are trained to remind students of the components of the lunch, however, we encourage you to ask your child each day what he/she chose for lunch. At the elementary schools, we have a marketing strategy called "Balloons for a Balanced Lunch". Each balloon is a different color and represents a different food group. Food items on the line are labeled with these colored balloons. Students are encouraged to "grab a balloon of each color" for a balanced lunch!

Technically, students can grab 7 components with the lunch (grain, protein, milk, 2 fruits, 2 vegetables). We encourage you to take advantage of all the nutrition that the school lunch provides!

*Kristen Mueller, RD*