

FRESH BITES NEWSLETTER

December 2020

Fill the holiday-meal gap and boost your revenues

This year, due in part to the coronavirus pandemic, 17 million children - 1 in every 4 kids - may not know where they will get their next meal.

Source: Feeding America

Only 44% of households in the U.S. are very confident they have the resources to make sure their children have enough to eat over the next four weeks.

Source: No Kid Hungry

The headlines tell the story: hunger and food insecurity are on the rise because of the coronavirus. According to hunger-relief organization Feeding America, more than 50 million people, and a potential 17 million children, may experience food insecurity in 2020, due to the pandemic. Before COVID-19, more than 10 million children lived in food-insecure households.

School meals are a critical stopgap measure for childhood hunger. Foodservice programs across the country have overcome major hurdles all year to continue feeding kids during distance and hybrid learning as well as in school, abiding by social distancing protocols.

The holidays are supposed to be “merry and bright,” a time of “cheer,” and the “most wonderful time of the year.” It’s not for many kids because they may not know when they’ll have their next meal.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

The end of 2020 is near! Before we wrap up the year with a bow, we have a few important announcements and free resources to share with you in this issue of Fresh Bites.

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Fill the holiday-meal gap and boost your revenues

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As you send students on their way for holiday break, don't send them away hungry!

We recently learned USDA is allowing state agencies to consider schools' appeals to provide students with more than a 7-day meal pack for the holiday break. That's good news for kids and could bring in extra revenues for your foodservice program.

Processes likely vary from state to state but according to the Minnesota Department of Education:

USDA is allowing state agencies to consider on a case-by-case basis exemptions of more than one-week bulk meal distribution, and MDE has developed a protocol for an exemption request. If sponsors (schools) have a temporary need to provide bulk meals to students for a period greater than seven days, the sponsor must submit a written request to our office via email at mde.fns@state.mn.us. Sponsors should include in the request the proposed menu for all meals that will be packed together, the rationale or description of the limiting factors that would preclude a 7-day meal (or less) distribution, describe the proposed meal distribution method, and identify how challenges such as meal preparation and temperature control for perishable products will be met by the typical family. MDE will review the request to ensure that the plan meets child nutrition program criteria and aligns with program intent as closely as possible.

Check with your state's governing agency to find out how you can provide meals for more than 7 days into the holiday break. Using any number of shelf-stable food items that are generally available from distributors, you could extend meals into January, depending on when you leave on break.

Headlines from our Food News feed:

- [Not Enough to Eat: COVID-19 Deepens America's Hunger Crisis](#)
- [Cut off: School closings leave rural students isolated](#)
- [Advocates say hunger, food anxiety grow during pandemic](#)
- [New Mexico district to provide meals for holiday break](#)
- [Arkansas district extends free meal program for a week during winter break](#)
- [Grocery kits are the 'secret sauce' to feed kids](#)
- [How schools plan to keep meals cooking amid colder weather, strained budgets](#)

[More headlines](#)



**We're in the holiday spirit!
Enter to win
the gift of
one-year free!**

New Issue of *Cafeteria Connection*: Storing, preparing at-home meals

If your distance-learning meals include foods that need to be refrigerated and heated before being eaten, take advantage of the latest issue of *Cafeteria Connection* to help your families know which items need to be kept cold and how to heat select items to the proper temperature.

You can download this issue now by signing up for a **FREE** subscription to *Cafeteria Connection*. Upon subscribing, you'll have instant access to our current library of issues (listed below) and you will receive an email once a month when we add a new issue.

You can add your school/district imprint or logo at the top left of each issue to make it yours. Our current library includes:

- Bag lunch vs. school lunch - which is better?
- Farm to school movement brings fresher foods to schools
- Helping kids choose 'smart snacks'
- Salad bars - a bountiful buffet
- School breakfast - a time-saving, nutritious choice
- Broadening appeal of school lunch entices students
- Kids' summer routines can include regular healthy meals
- Mealtime is a Time for Learning
- Ending the food fights; Creating meals kids love
- Free resources make at-home nutrition education easy
- Food & fun to support children's emotional wellbeing
- Extensive procedures ensure safety of school meals
- Safely store and prepare your distance-learning meals

Cafeteria Connection
Connecting you to your child's school lunchroom

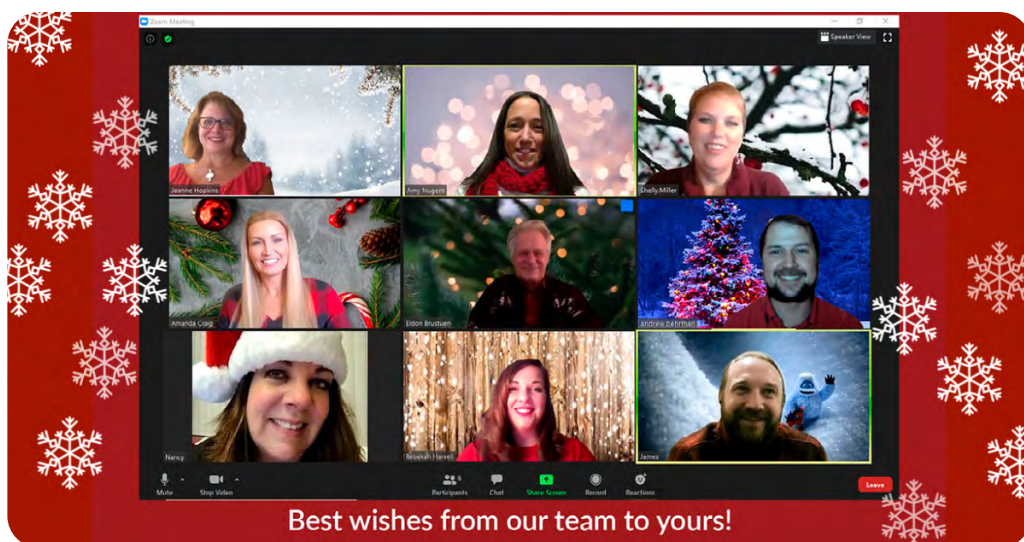
Safely Store and Prepare Your Distance-Learning Meals

We miss our bustling cafeteria and students' smiling faces! At least we can still provide your child with regular meals to help with their physical, mental and emotional development. Some of the at-home meals we provide to you regularly include items that may need to be refrigerated or heated before they can be eaten. Please take a minute to read the information below to safely store and prepare your meals.

SUBSCRIBE NOW FOR FREE

Cafeteria Connection Parents' Newsletter

Cafeteria Connection can be posted to your website, shared on social media and provided to students and parents via meal packs or email. Take advantage of this free resource today.




Get customized pictorial menus

NutriStudents K-12 clients, we want to provide you with customized, monthly pictorial calendar menus. Send us your menu rotation for January and February, and we'll return to you a PDF file you can send home, email and post online. If you have custom menu days (non-NutriStudents K-12 meals), we will insert a generic graphic for the menu image unless you provide us an image of the meal. You can see an example below and [see the available backgrounds here](#). Expected turnaround time is 1-3 business days.

Email Client Relations Director [Shelly Miller](#) to get started.

December 2020

Lewiston-Altura School District #857

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
30  Greek Chicken Wrap	1  Egg Salad Wrap	2  Ham Sandwich	3  Turkey Bagel Sandwich	4  Chef Salad
7  Fiesta Chicken Bowl	8  Assorted Muffin & Yogurt	9  Craisin Chicken Bagel Sandwich	10  Asian Chicken Wrap	11  Pancakes with Yogurt
14  Turkey Bagel Sandwich	15  Craisin Chicken Bowl	16  Chef Salad	17  Fiesta Chicken Pasta	18  Asian Chicken Sandwich
21  Greek Chicken Wrap	22  Egg Salad Wrap	23  Ham Sandwich	24 No School	25 No School
28 No School	29 No School	30 No School	31 No School	1 No School

Menu subject to change. A variety of milk is offered daily.
Side may differ from photos.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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