



Virginia Department of Corrections

Facility Services and Work

Food Service Manual Chapter 3

Menu Planning

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12/22/2025

Signature

Date

REVIEW

The Director of Food Services will ensure that each Chapter of the Food Service Manual is reviewed annually and revised as necessary.

COMPLIANCE

The Food Service Manual is issued with the intent to pull together information from a variety of sources such as directives, operating procedures, regulations, and other mandatory requirements and applies to all Food Service activities in facilities operated by the Department of Corrections (DOC). Contract Food Service vendors must follow all provisions of the Food Service Manual within the specifications of their contract. This manual will not change requirements contained in any approved directive or operating procedure, but does contain specific operational details not included in other documents. Practices and procedures must comply with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, American Correctional Association (ACA) standards, and DOC directives and operating procedures.

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DEFINITIONS

Food Production Worksheet – A document with each day’s menu that provides directions for preparing each meal and provides space to record the number of meals served, time, and temperature of each food served.

Health Authority – The Health Administrator responsible for the provision of health care services at a facility or system of institutions. The responsible Physician may be the Health Authority.

Health Record – A file that contains information relative to the inmate’s or CCAP probationer’s/parolee’s medical, dental, and mental health condition, and treatment. The health record is maintained at the inmate’s or CCAP probationer’s/parolee’s facility of assignment and follows the inmate or CCAP probationer/parolee throughout the term of incarceration or period of supervision.

Medical Practitioner – A Physician, Nurse Practitioner, or Physician’s Assistant.

Registered Dietitian (RD) – A food and nutrition expert who has completed a minimum of a bachelor’s degree at a US regionally accredited university or college; completed an Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics-accredited supervised practice program; passed a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); and maintains current registration with the CDR.

PURPOSE

This Chapter of the Food Service Manual ensures that menus for inmates and Community Corrections Alternative Program (CCAP) probationers/parolees in Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities are served meals that are nutritionally adequate, food costs are maintained within established budgets, and food supply requirements can be anticipated. Provision is made for the availability and management of nutritionally adequate therapeutic diets for inmates whose medical condition necessitates alteration from a regular facility diet.

PROCEDURE

- I. Menus and Substitutions
 - A. Meals will be served in accordance with the master menus and the *Therapeutic Diet Handbook – Food Service*, Attachment 1. (5-ACI-5C-04)
 1. A Registered Dietitian (RD) must ensure that the menus meet the nationally recommended allowances for basic nutrition and must review the master menus annually. (4-ACRS-4A-01; 2-CO-4C-01)
 2. The master menu and facility modified menu will be posted in a designated area at each facility.
 - a. The master menu is written and signed by the Director of Nutrition Services and the facility modified menu will be posted at all facilities.
 - b. The facility modified menu will illustrate any changes made to the master menu and must be signed by the facility Food Service Director/Manager prior to posting.
 - c. A copy of the facility modified menu and the email documenting the distribution of the facility modified menu will be printed and maintained with the facility *Food Production Worksheets*.
 - d. Inmates may be provided with copies of the posted master menu upon request and upon payment of applicable photocopying charges.
 3. Facility Food Service Directors/Managers must conduct a *Menu Evaluation* FSM_F15, at least quarterly to verify adherence to the established basic daily servings as outlined in the master menu.
 - B. All facilities will follow the appropriate master menu and will adhere to the portions indicated on the menu. The planning and preparation of all meals will take into consideration food flavor, texture, temperature, appearance, and palatability. (5-ACI-5C-05; 2-CO-4C-01)
 - C. To maintain the nutritional integrity of the menu, substitutions will be nutritionally equal to or superior to the item which is being substituted. Substitutions of menu items are allowed only when certain foods are unavailable, there is equipment failure, there is a lockdown, or to take advantage of the availability of seasonal farm products, special purchases, and/or donated commodities.
 1. These substitutions will be made on the *Food Production Worksheet* and approved by the Food Operations Director/Manager. The *Food Production Worksheet* with drop-down boxes will be utilized to assist with proper substitutions of menu items.
 2. Substitutions not listed in the drop-down boxes may also be used and written in under “other”. RDs may request *Food Production Worksheets* for review if ongoing issues with substitutions are identified during dietitian reviews.
 3. During lockdowns, if water is available in the cell, it may be substituted for the menu beverage at lunch and dinner meals.
 4. All facilities will serve coffee on lockdown as indicated on all official DOC menus.
 - D. Lunch and dinner menus of the same day may be rotated if necessary. Menus will not be rotated from one day to another. However, temporary adjustments on the menus may be made to accommodate special meals on holidays, picnics, cookouts, etc.
 - E. The number of meals prepared will be based on the history of inmate meal consumption. Meal consumption history is to be tracked on the Attachment 2, *History Sheet - Sample*, for all meals.

- F. Portion control will be used in meal planning, preparation, and service to prevent excessive plate waste and leftovers. Portions will be served in the quantities indicated on the master menus and will be enforced for both employees and inmates.
- G. Leftovers will be noted by portion on the *Food Production Worksheet* and used appropriately.
- H. Substitutions made for food allergies will be documented on the *Therapeutic Diet Substitution Report* form in VACORIS.
 - 1. Food service employees must document the planned menu item and the substitution for that item.
 - 2. The form will be printed and attached to the *Food Production Worksheet*.
- I. All food and food supplies, except for agribusiness, will be ordered through eVA and will require the Director of Food Services or designee approval.

II. Master Menus

- A. The purpose of master menus is to ensure that nutritionally adequate menus are made available as approved by the Director of Nutrition Services.
- B. The master menus will control food for all inmates; no unauthorized meals will be prepared.
- C. Adjustments to serving times are allowed to accommodate special circumstances such as holidays.
- D. Any deviation from the master menus will only be in accordance with authorized substitutions. The Food Operations Director/Manager or designee must list and initial the approved substitutions on the *Food Production Worksheet* prior to meal preparation.
- E. The Facility Unit Head's designee must attest that each meal served coincides with the *Food Production Worksheet*. Such designee will not be a food service employee and must note any deviations and report them to the Facility Unit Head.
- F. An entrée and alternative entrée will be provided daily as indicated on master menus. For inmates with a documented food allergy to the alternative, a second alternative will be provided as outlined in Appendix 5 of Attachment 1, *Therapeutic Diet Handbook - Food Service*.
- G. On initial placement in a Restorative Housing Unit, the inmate (if not on Common Fare or the Sealed Religious Diet) must designate if they want to receive regular or alternate entrée food trays.
 - 1. The Restorative Housing Unit Supervisor must allow the inmate the opportunity to change their choice of tray type every 90 days they remain in a Restorative Housing Unit.
 - 2. Any inmate approved for a religious diet will be provided Common Fare or Sealed Religious Diet meals, as appropriate, while in a Restorative Housing Unit, if such meals are available at that facility.

III. Religious Diets

- A. Inmates following specific religious diets may require reassignment to a facility which provides such diets.
- B. A new religious diet may not be initiated at a facility without permission from the Deputy Director for Institutions.
- C. Food Service Manual Chapter 4, *Religious Diets and Special Menus*, provides information on the religious diets available at facilities to accommodate inmates whose religious beliefs require adherence to religious dietary laws and on special religious observance meals for inmates and CCAP probationers/parolees.

IV. Therapeutic Diets (5-ACI-5C-06; 4-ACRS-4A-02; 2-CO-4C-01)

- A. The Director of Nutrition Services must develop guidelines under which all facility therapeutic diets must be prepared and served. These guidelines will be the *Therapeutic Diet Handbook – Food Service*, Attachment 1, and the *Therapeutic Diet Handbook – Health Services*, Attachment 2, which will be

available in all facility health services departments and food service areas.

B. Diet Orders

1. Therapeutic diets will only be prescribed by a Medical Practitioner or Dentist as appropriate.
2. Orders for therapeutic diets must include:
 - a. the inmate's name;
 - b. DOC number;
 - c. name of the Medical Practitioner or Dentist as appropriate;
 - d. issuance date;
 - e. type of diet;
 - f. duration of the prescription; and
 - g. any special instructions.
3. No therapeutic diet order will exceed one year.
4. Therapeutic diets will be ordered using the *Diet Order* FSM_F10 or the diet order form in the DOC Health electronic health record.
5. When using the *Diet Order* FSM_F10, the Health Authority or designee must transcribe the therapeutic diet order from the inmate's electronic health record onto a *Diet Order* FSM_F10, and the *Diet Order* must be signed by the ordering Medical Practitioner or Dentist as appropriate.
6. The following standard therapeutic diets may be ordered:
 - a. Clear Liquid;
 - b. Full Liquid;
 - c. IDDSI Level 4 (Pureed);
 - d. IDDSI Level 7 (Easy to Chew);
 - e. Dialysis Diet – at facilities with dialysis services only;
 - f. Diabetic Diet (Consistent Carbohydrate);
 - g. Celiac Diet; or
 - h. Safety Diet.
7. Standard therapeutic diet orders will be sent to the facility's food service department.
8. Non-standard therapeutic diets may be written in under "Other" on the *Diet Order* FSM_F10 or selected in DOC Health. Non-standard therapeutic diet orders will be sent to the facility's food service department and the DOC RD distribution email, DOC-Dietitians@vadoc.virginia.gov. All therapeutic diet orders must be reviewed and renewed at least annually.
9. Therapeutic diet orders will be entered into VACORIS Food Service Module when received. *Diet Orders* will be kept in the food service department for three years.
10. Diet order renewal
 - a. Food service employees must utilize the VACORIS Food Service Module to manage therapeutic diet order renewals.
 - b. By the 10th of each month, food service employees must send a list of therapeutic diet renewals needed for the next month to the facility Health Authority.
 - c. The Medical Practitioner must reorder the therapeutic diet if indicated. If indicated, the Health Authority must send the new *Diet Order* to food service employees.
 - d. If not indicated, the Health Authority must notify food service employees that the therapeutic diet has been discontinued and will not be renewed.

C. Preparation



1. Therapeutic diet preparation and service is the responsibility of the facility's food service department.
2. All therapeutic diets will be prepared in accordance with Attachment 1, *Therapeutic Diet Handbook – Food Service*, based on recognized standards.

D. Education and Training

1. The Regional RD and Regional Food Service Director must train facility Food Service Directors, Managers, and other food service employees regarding the importance of proper preparation and service of therapeutic diets.
2. When initiating a new therapeutic diet, the prescriber must:
 - a. ensure the inmate is educated on the clinical indication for the diet;
 - b. notate the duration;
 - c. include any special instructions; and
 - d. provide recommended food restrictions, including commissary items for self-management.
3. Education may include written material with emphasis on foods to avoid, foods that are of benefit, and weight management, when appropriate.
 - a. The inmate must sign a *Diet Education Acknowledgement* FSM_F12 as documentation of receiving diet education.
 - b. The prescription and the education will be documented in the inmate's health record.
4. A RD consultation will be generated if a Medical Provider needs assistance determining a non-standard therapeutic diet or providing medical nutrition therapy/nutrition education to inmates on any therapeutic diet.
 - a. RD consultation will be requested using the *Nutrition Consultation Request* FSM_F36 and sent to the DOC RD distribution email, DOC-Dietitians@vadoc.virginia.gov.
 - b. RD consultations will be conducted virtually or in person. Virtual consultations may be conducted by phone, video conference, or telehealth.
5. All inmates ordered a non-standard therapeutic diet must be assessed by the Regional RD and recommendations sent to the ordering Medical Practitioner or Dentist as appropriate. A non-standard therapeutic diet is one that is not listed on the *Diet Order* FSM_F10, referenced in the *Therapeutic Diet Handbooks* (Attachments 1&2), is a food allergy diet, or a combination of therapeutic diets.
6. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Nutrition Care Manual (NCM) evidence-based nutrition education materials must be used by health services employees for consistency across all correctional facilities.

E. When inmates on therapeutic diets are transferred, the inmate's health record, which contains the diet prescription, must be sent to the new facility.

V. Restricted Feeding Diet Loaf

- A. The Facility Unit Head or Administrative Duty Officer, only, may authorize use of the restricted feeding diet loaf; see Operating Procedure 420.2, *Use of Restraints and Management of Inmate Behavior*.
- B. The restricted feeding diet loaf must be prepared under employee supervision only and exactly in accordance with the diet loaf recipe.
- C. Inmates placed on restricted feeding procedures must be provided with a bag meal twice every 24 hours.
 1. Each bag meal must contain only one diet loaf prepared without any deviation from the recipe.
 2. Diabetic inmates must be provided with a bag meal consisting of one-half diet loaf three times per day.

VI. Hunger Strike Trays

- A. Hunger strike trays will:



1. replace milk with one serving of dairy;
2. replace juice with one serving of fruit; and
3. include water with meals.

B. See Operating Procedure 730.5, *MHWS: Behavior Management* for guidance.

VII. Transportation Bag Meals

A. Transportation bag meals must contain:

1. two peanut butter/jelly sandwiches;
2. six carrots or celery sticks or half a cup of chopped vegetables;
3. one piece of fruit; and
4. water.

B. The Regional RD must visit each facility three times a year with observations documented on a *Dietitian's Report on Food Service*, Attachment 5. The Regional RD will visit the infirmaries annually and as needed.

REFERENCES

Food Service Manual Chapter 4, *Religious Diets and Special Menus*

Operating Procedure 420.2, *Use of Restraints and Management of Inmate Behavior*

Operating Procedure 730.5, *MHWS: Behavior Management*

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1, *Therapeutic Diet Handbook - Food Service*

Attachment 2, *Therapeutic Diet Handbook - Health Services*

Attachment 3, *History Sheet - Sample*

Attachment 4A, *Diet Education Handout #1 NCM Plate Method for Diabetes*

Attachment 4B, *Diet Education Handout #2 NCM Healthful Eating*

Attachment 4C, *Diet Education Handout #3 NCM Chronic Kidney Disease*

Attachment 5, *Dietitian's Report on Food Service*

FORM CITATIONS

Diet Order FSM_F10

Diet Education Acknowledgement FSM_F12

Menu Evaluation FSM_F15

Nutrition Consultation Request FSM_F36