

## Getting Started with the USDA Foods Database

Welcome to the USDA Foods Database! This tool provides state agencies and school districts with access to vendor-specific product information for USDA Foods. The data is submitted by vendors who supply USDA Foods for the National School Lunch Program. The USDA Foods Database is organized into **six sections**. Below is an overview of each section to help you navigate the database effectively.

### SECTION 1: PRODUCT INFORMATION

This section includes basic details about each product:

- **Food Category** – Matches categories from the [USDA Foods Available List](#) (e.g., Fruits, Vegetables, Poultry, Beef, Nuts and Seeds).
- **Material Code and Description** – Corresponds to the *USDA Foods Description* and *WBSCM #*.
- **Product Description** – Provides additional product details such as U.S. Grade, flavor profile, cut size, pack size, etc.
- **Vendor Name** – Name of the USDA Foods vendor supplying the product.
- **Brand Name** – Brand name found on the product packaging.
- **Global Item Trade Number (GTIN)** – Number used by a vendor to uniquely identify each of its products.
- **Serving Size** – Amount equal to one serving; typically listed in tablespoons, cups, ounces, slices, pieces, patty, or container.
- **Grams per Serving** – Weight of the serving size in grams; beverages may be listed in milliliters.
- **Servings per Case** – Total servings per case based on the serving size.
- **CN Crediting** – Indicates how the product credits or contributes to the Child Nutrition (CN) meal pattern requirements. If available, CN Label or Product Formulation Statement documents are hyperlinked.

### SECTION 2: NUTRIENTS

This section displays nutrient values typically found on a Nutrition Facts Label. If a value is blank, the vendor has not tested for that nutrient. Nutrients include:

- Calories (kcal)
- Total fat (g)
  - Saturated fat (g)
  - Trans fat (g)
- Cholesterol (mg)
- Sodium (mg)
- Total Carbohydrates (g)
  - Dietary Fiber (g)
  - Total Sugar (g)
  - Added Sugar (g)
- Protein (g)
- Vitamin D (mcg)
- Calcium (mg)
- Iron (mg)
- Potassium (mg)

### SECTION 3: ALLERGENS

This section shows how vendors declare the presence of the top 9 allergens: **eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, sesame, shellfish, soybeans, tree nuts, and wheat**. Vendors may use the following terms:

- **Contains** – Allergen is present in the product.
- **Derived From** – Product is derived from the allergen or ingredients that contain the allergen.
- **May Contain** – The allergen may be found in the product due to potential cross-contamination by using a shared processing facility with other products that contain the allergen.
- **Free From** – Allergen is not present, verified by analysis.
- **Not Intentionally Nor Inherently Included** – Allergen not added or naturally present, but no analysis was conducted.
- **Undeclared/No Declaration** – Vendor has not declared the allergen as present or not present in the product. FNS discourages this and works with vendors to clarify.
- **Blank Entries** – Vendor has provided all relevant allergen information. Unpopulated allergens are either not relevant or not required to be populated. Always verify allergen information using the allergen statement on the product packaging before serving.

### SECTION 4: CERTIFICATIONS

This section indicates whether the product has a **kosher or halal certification**. Certifications (e.g., Orthodox Union, Star-K) are listed in the field. If the field is blank, the product is not certified.

### SECTION 5: INGREDIENTS

This section lists all ingredients that are found in the product in descending order by weight.

### SECTION 6: LAST UPDATED

This section shows the date the vendor last updated the product information. Vendors are only required to submit product information once, so this date may appear outdated. Updates are required if:

1. The product formulation changes.
2. New nutrient analyses or allergen testing result in updated values.

The **date in the bottom right corner** of the USDA Foods Database reflects when the product information was accessed. If printed or saved as a PDF, this date will appear on the document.

### DISCLAIMER

The following disclaimer is located at the bottom of the USDA Foods Database:

*Information available on this site has been supplied by the USDA Foods vendor and was last updated on the date indicated in the Last Updated field. FNS is sharing vendor-supplied product information as a planning tool for school districts and is not responsible for misreported or missing information. Please use the allergen statement provided on the outside of the physical product to verify allergen information prior to serving the product.*

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Vendors must submit their product information to USDA via the **GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN®)** within **20 days** of being awarded a contract.
- Once submitted, it typically takes **about 30 days** for the data to appear in the USDA Foods Database, assuming the information is complete and accurate.
- If errors or missing data are found, publication will be delayed until corrections are made.
- If a vendor no longer supplies a product to USDA, the product information will be removed from the database once it is no longer available in local inventory.

#### QUESTIONS?

Email [USDAFoods@usda.gov](mailto:USDAFoods@usda.gov) for assistance with information found in the USDA Foods Database.

**Now that you're familiar with the structure of the USDA Foods Database, continue to the next page for step-by-step instructions on how to use it.**

### How to Use the USDA Foods Database

To find vendor-specific product information in the USDA Foods Database, search using the 6-digit USDA material code. Before searching, check the [List of Required Products](#) to confirm whether the product you are looking for is included in the database. Once confirmed, follow these instructions:

1. **Download the USDA Foods Database file:**
  - Open the file and select **File > Save As** to download a copy to your computer.
  - The database can only be navigated once it is saved locally.
2. **Enable macros to activate search functions:**
  - When you open the spreadsheet, a yellow **Security Warning** bar will appear at the top. Click **"Enable Content"** to enable macros.
  - You may also see a prompt asking: *"Do you want to make this file a Trusted Document?"*. Click **Yes** to proceed.
3. **Select a food category:**
  - Click into **cell B1**, then click the drop-down arrow to the right of the cell.
  - Choose the desired food category from the list.
  - A pop-up box will appear stating: *"Listing only <selected category> in Cell D1."* Click **OK**.
4. **Select a material code:**
  - Click into **cell D1 or E1**, then click the drop-down arrow next to **cell E1**.
  - Choose the desired material code.
  - A pop-up box will appear stating: *"Would you like to import <selected material code and description> information?"*. Click **Yes**.
5. **View product information:**
  - Product information will populate across all six sections of the spreadsheet.
  - A pop-up box will appear stating: *"<selected material code and description> information imported."* Click **OK**.
  - **Notes:**
    - Vendors supplying the selected material will be listed in **columns B through E**.
    - The database displays **4 vendors per page**. Scroll down to view additional vendors.
    - If no product information is available, a pop-up box will appear stating: *"Vendor information for <selected material code and description> is not available."* Click **OK** to search for another material code.
6. **To search for another product:**
  - Repeat **steps 1 through 5**.
7. **To clear the product information:**
  - Click in the **food category field (cell B1)** and press the **Delete** key on your keyboard.
  - A pop-up box will appear stating: *"This will clear summary information."* Click **OK**.
  - A final pop-up box will appear stating: *"Summary information cleared."* Click **OK**.