

Getting Started with the USDA Foods Database

Welcome to the USDA Foods Database! The USDA Foods Database is a tool that State Agencies and school districts can use to access vendor-specific product information for USDA Foods. The information found in this database has been submitted by USDA Foods vendors that supply USDA Foods for the National School Lunch Program.

The USDA Foods Database is organized into **six sections**. Below is additional information about each section that may assist in navigating the USDA Foods Database.

Section 1: Product Information – This section contains basic information about each product including:

- **Food Category** – same as the categories found on the [USDA Foods Available List](#) such as Fruits, Vegetables, Poultry, Beef, Nuts and Seeds, etc.
- **Material Code and Description** – same as the *USDA Foods Description* and *WBSCM #* found on the USDA Foods Available List
- **Product Description** – provides additional details about the product such as U.S. Grade, flavor profile, cut size, pack size, etc.
- **Vendor Name** – name of the USDA Foods vendor who supplies the product
- **Brand Name** – name of the brand that can be found on the packaging of the product
- **Global Item Trade Number (GTIN)** – number used by a company to uniquely identify each of its products
- **Serving Size** – amount equal to one serving, typically reported in tablespoons, cups, ounces, slices, pieces, patty, or container
- **Grams per Serving** – weight of the Serving Size in grams
- **Servings per Case** – number of servings yielded per case, based on the Serving Size
- **CN Crediting** – information on how the product credits or contributes towards meal pattern requirements for Child Nutrition (CN) programs. If the vendor has provided CN Label or Product Formulation Statement documentation, the text with crediting information will be hyperlinked to the document.

Section 2: Nutrients – This section contains nutrient information that is typically found on a Nutrition Facts Label. If any of these values are blank, the vendor has not tested for the nutrient and is unable to provide a value. The following nutrients are in this section:

- 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 contains information on how each vendor declares the top 9 allergens: eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, sesame, shellfish, soybeans, tree nuts, and wheat. Please note that vendors are not required to declare sesame as an allergen until January 1, 2023 ([click this link to learn more about this requirement](#)). Therefore, there may be blank entries for this allergen. A blank entry for sesame does not indicate that sesame is not contained in the product.

Vendors can use the following terms to declare allergens for their products:

- **Contains** – the allergen is found in the product.
- **Derived From** – the product has been 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 that allergen.
- **Free From** – an analysis has been completed to verify the allergen is not found in the product.
- **Not Intentionally Nor Inherently Included** – the allergen is not found in the product, but an analysis was not completed to verify that the allergen is not present. An analysis is not required because the allergen was not added during processing and is not inherently or naturally found in the product.
- **Undeclared/No Declaration** – the vendor has decided not to declare the allergen as present or not present for the product. FNS does not recommend this entry and will work with vendors to determine which of the other allergen declaration statements are appropriate for the product.
- **Blank Entries** – the vendor has provided all of the allergen information that is available for the product. All values not populated are either not relevant or not required to be populated for the product. Use the allergen statement provided on the outside of the physical product to verify allergen information prior to serving the product.

Section 4: Certifications – This section identifies if a product has a kosher or halal certification. All certifications will be listed in the field (i.e., Orthodox Union, Star-K, etc.). If the field is blank, the product does not have a kosher or halal certification.

Section 5: Ingredients – This section includes a list of all ingredients that are found in the product. The ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, so the ingredient that weighs the most in the product is listed first, and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last.

Section 6: Last Updated – The date listed in this field is the date the vendor last updated the information found in the USDA Foods Database. Vendors only need to submit product information once, therefore over time, this date may appear outdated. Vendors are required to update product information if (1) the product formulation has changed and/or (2) the vendor has conducted a new nutrient analysis or allergen test which has resulted in updated nutrient or allergen values.



The date in the bottom right of the USDA Foods Database is the date that the product information was accessed. If information from the USDA Foods Database is printed or saved as a PDF, this date will appear in the bottom right of the document.

Disclaimer: The following disclaimer will be 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 listed above. 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 have 20 days after they are awarded a contract to supply products for the National School Lunch Program to enter their information into GS1 GDSN®. There will be approximately a 30-day period from when the vendor's product information is entered into GS1 GDSN® until when it will be available in the USDA Foods Database.

If a vendor no longer sells their product to USDA, USDA will remove the vendor's product information from the USDA Foods Database once it is no longer available in local inventory.

Email USDAFoods@usda.gov if you have any questions about information found in the USDA Foods Database.

How to Use the USDA Foods Database

Vendor-specific product information can be found in the USDA Foods Database by utilizing the 6-digit USDA material code. Click this link to access the [List of Required Products for the USDA Foods Database](#).

To search for product information:

1. Open the file and select **File** and **Save As** to *Download a Copy* to your computer. Note: the USDA Foods Database can only be navigated once downloaded and saved.
2. Once downloaded, open the file on your computer and click **Enable Content** in the yellow Security Warning at the top of the spreadsheet. Another Security Warning may appear asking *“Do you want to make this file a Trusted Document?”*. Click **Yes**.
3. Click the **Food Category** drop-down and select the desired food category. Note: the drop down can be accessed by single clicking into cell B1 and then clicking the box with the down arrow to the right of Cell B1.
4. A pop-up box will appear stating, *“Listing only <selected category> in Cell D1.”* Click **OK**.
5. Click the **Material Code** drop-down and select the desired material code. Note: the drop down can be accessed by single clicking into cell D1/E1 and then clicking the box with the down arrow next to the right of Cell E1.
6. A pop-up box will appear stating, *“Would you like to import <selected material code and description> information?”*. Click **Yes**.
7. Product information will appear in all six sections of the spreadsheet. A pop-up box will also appear stating, *“<selected material code and description> information imported.”* Click **OK**.
 - a. Each vendor that supplies the selected material will be listed in columns B through E.
 - b. The USDA Foods Database will list 4 vendors per page. Scroll down to the next page to see additional vendors.
 - c. If product information is not available in the USDA Foods Database, 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.
8. Repeat steps 1 through 5 to search for new product information.
9. To clear the product information, click in the food category field (cell B1) and hit the **Delete** button on your keyboard.
10. A pop-up box will appear stating *“This will clear summary information.”* Click **OK**.
11. The product information has been cleared and a pop-up box will appear stating, *“Summary information cleared.”*