

Menu Planning

Overview

Minute Menu allows you to create both one time and re-usable menu plans, well in advance. Along with these plans, you can estimate the numbers of children to be served, and Minute Menu will provide you with the quantity required for that estimate. When the meal is actually served, Minute Menu will automatically calculate the quantity required based upon the actual child meal counts you record. You can further use Minute Menu to record the actual quantity of foods you prepare/offer.

For back office staff, the software allows you to create a centralized menu calendar – what Minute Menu refers to as a Master Menu. This Master Menu can be used by individual centers at their choice, or you can push the plan out to one or more centers.

Beyond individual menus, Minute Menu can prepare full Menu Production Records as required by the food program. And Minute Menu can cross check every menu when it processes your claims, to ensure all USDA rules are followed by every center.

Some Considerations

Meals are offered in many different ways by different centers. Some centers use vended food services. Chains of centers sometimes coordinate with a central kitchen to deliver food to individual sites – frequently with meal count estimates being provided by the sites to the central office in advance. Many more centers prepare food in on-site kitchens. Sometimes, central office staff provide centralized menu plans that on-site kitchens base their menus around. Sometime it's a combination of all of these. Sometimes, agencies may choose to avoid using the menu planning features in Minute Menu entirely.

Minute Menu has been designed to work in virtually all of these situations, but it will work in different ways. Please use these instructions as a general guide, and tailor Minute Menu's features to work the best for you.

Planning Menus for Centers

If your agency centrally plans menus for your individual sites, Minute Menu can help. (If not, skip this section).

There are two key ways to plan centralized menus:

1. Set up a single monthly Master Menu plan that can be given to any center
2. Set up reusable templates (for breakfast, lunch/dinner, and snacks) that centers can choose to use on any dates they like

Using Master Menus

A Master Menu is a single monthly plan of all meals that can be served in a month. To begin recording an individual master menu meal, go to **Menus / Attendance >> Record Master Menu Plan**.

1. Choose the date you want to plan
2. Choose the meal.
3. Plan each menu component for that meal, for non-infants & infants. Click the [...] button to pull up a list of foods.
4. Record any special notes (like alternate foods) you think necessary.
5. Click [Save] when done.

This process can be repeated for each meal in the month.

You can review the month as a whole by going to **Menus / Attendance >> Master Menu Calendar**.

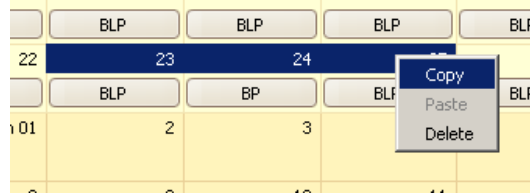
In this case, everything but AM Snack was recorded for each weekday in the month. (Notice the meal abbreviations: B for Breakfast, L for Lunch, P for PM Snack, etc).

Double click any day to drill down to the specific meal view for that day.

Click the [Print] button to print the selected week's master menu plan. (You can also print the master menu plan from Reports >> Menus >> Master Menu Weekly Plan).

You can also use the Master Menu Calendar to copy one or more days' worth of master menus to any other day. Right click on any date in the calendar (above the button), and you'll see a gray menu appear giving you the ability to copy. Right click on another day, and you can paste. If

you want to copy a range, use the <SHIFT> key on your keyboard while clicking with your mouse and you'll select a range of days. Again, right click to copy, as shown here:



Then go to the new date (perhaps in a new month), right click, and choose paste.

Assigning Master Menus to Centers

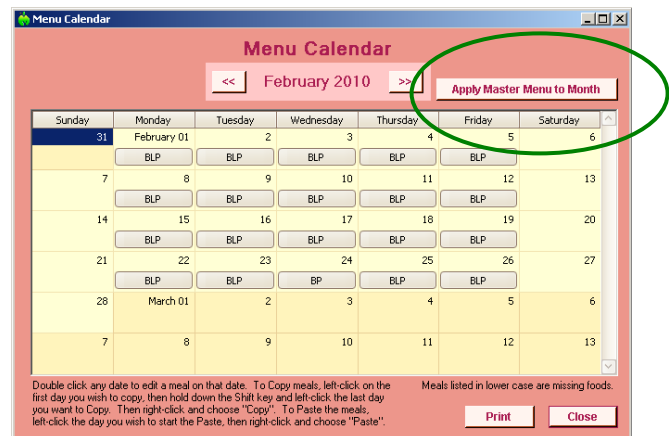
You can assign a single center the Master Menu for an entire month. You can also assign all centers (or a selection of centers) Master Menus for an entire month. And centers can choose to use Master Menus on their own (if they do some menu planning on their own, but you provide a Master Menu as a possible choice).

To assign all your centers the entire month's worth of Master Menus, go to **Menus / Attendance >> Master Menu Calendar**. You'll see the **[Apply Master Menu to Centers]** button.

This button will apply the master menu plan to all your currently active centers. But it does apply a few filters. First, if a center doesn't have any infants enrolled, none of the infant menus that you've planned as part of the Master Menu will be applied to that center. Second, even if your Master Menu includes all six meals of the day (breakfast, am snack, lunch, pm snack, dinner, and evening snack), each center will only get menus that it's approved for, based upon the menus noted in Manage Center Information on the License/Schedule tab. Third, if the center already has a menu planned for one of those meals, the Master Menu plan will not overwrite their existing menu plan. And Finally, only those centers that have the Use Master Menu checkbox checked in Manage Center Information on the License/Schedule tab will be assigned these master menus. This last filter allows you to differentiate between those sites that are planning their own menus, independent of your Master Menu plan, and those that are using your Master Menu plan.

You can assign a Master Menu plan to a single center, individually, if you like. First, choose the appropriate center in the **Select Center** drop down box on the main menu. Then go to **Menus / Attendance >> Menu Calendar**. This will pull up that center's specific menu calendar for the month:

Click the **[Apply Master Menu to Month]**, and this center will get the month's Master Menus (subject to the first three filters noted above).



Using Menu Templates

As opposed to Master Menus, menu templates are created generally but not assigned to specific dates. They can then be used when any individual menu is planned by a center (and even while you're recording an individual master menu).

To create a menu template, go to **Menus / Attendance >> Manage Menu Templates**. Initially, this function will be blank. But as you create menu templates, you'll start to see choices, like these:

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Menu Templates' window with three tabs: 'Breakfast', 'Lunch/Dinner', and 'Snack'. The 'Lunch/Dinner' tab is selected. Below the tabs are two sections: 'Non-Infant Menus' and 'Infant Menus'.

Non-Infant Menus Table:

Template Name	Bread	First Fruit / Veg	Second Fruit / Veg	Meat	Milk
1	Bagel (002)	Apples (001)			Whole Milk (7)
2	Biscuits (004)	Blueberries (006)			Whole Milk (7)
Breakfast1	Biscuits (004)	Orange-Pineapple Juic...			Whole Milk (7)
Breakfast2	White Bread (038)	Strawberries (037)			Whole Milk (7)
Breakfast3	Croissants (011)	Applesauce (002)			Whole Milk (7)
Breakfast4	English Muffin (014)	Raspberries (035)			Whole Milk (7)
Breakfast5	Popovers (028)	Berry Juicy Juice (057)			Whole Milk (7)
Breakfast6	Grits (224)	Bananas (004)			Whole Milk (7)

Infant Menus Table:

Template Name	0-3 Formula	4-7 Formula	4-7 Fruit/Veg	4-7 Infant Cereal	8-11 Formula	8-11 Bread/Meat	8-11 Veg/Fruit/Juice
1	Breast Milk / Iron...	Breast Milk / Iron...		Infant Rice Cerea...	Breast Milk / Iron...	Ham (048)	Raisins & Fruit / Veg ...
Oatmeal Cereal	Breast Milk / Iron...	Breast Milk / Iron...		Infant Oatmeal C...	Breast Milk / Iron...	Infant Oatmeal Cer...	Apples (001)
Oatmeal Cereal2	Breast Milk / Iron...	Breast Milk / Iron...		Infant Oatmeal C...	Breast Milk / Iron...	Infant Oatmeal Cer...	Apricots (003)

Select an individual meal type, like [Lunch/Dinner]. And click [Add] to begin adding a template for that type of meal.

Combination Plates

You can record partial menu templates if you like. For example, you could record Enchilada Plate as a Lunch/Dinner, and record three components of that template, like: Flour tortillas, cheese, baked beans. But you'd leave the other two blank, so when centers use that template they'd be able to add the second fruit/vegetable and the milk option.

Once Menu Templates are recorded, you'll be able to use those menu templates any time you record a master menu, or any time your centers record a menu. You'll

The screenshot shows the 'Record Menu Template' window. The title is 'Enchilada Plate'. Under 'Template Details', the 'Meal' is set to 'Lunch/Dinner' and 'Non-Infant Menu' is selected. Under 'Non-Infant Foods', the following items are listed:

- Bread / Alt: Tortilla (027)
- Meat / Alt: Cheese (050)
- Fruit / Juice / Veg: Baked Beans (152)
- Fruit / Juice / Veg: (blank)
- Milk: (blank)

Buttons at the bottom include 'Save and Add', 'Save', and 'Close'.

see a [Use Menu Template] button on the record menus screen.

Center Planned Menus

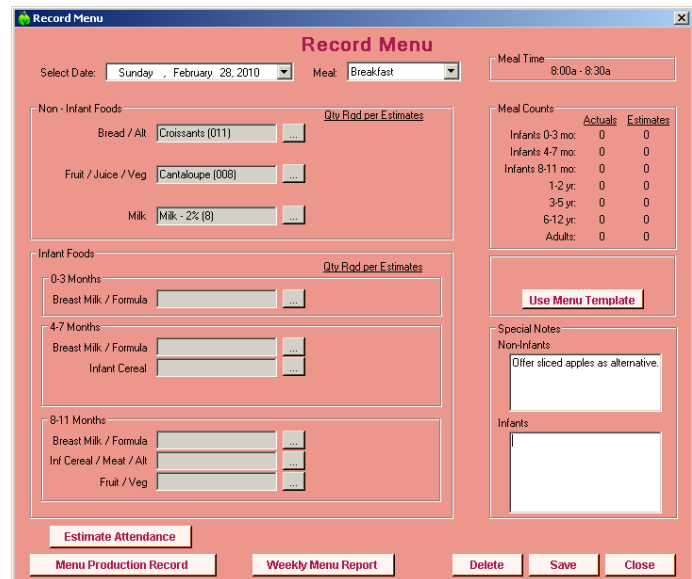
Centers can use Minute Menu to plan and record menus. Minute Menu will also prepare full Menu Production Records, with quantities, based upon the foods entered for those menus and the counts of children served.

To plan a menu, a center will click the [Menu Calendar] icon on their toolbar.



Each menu that has been planned will be listed with the meal's abbreviation. Center's can double click on any day in the calendar to drill down to a specific meal, and record the details of that meal:

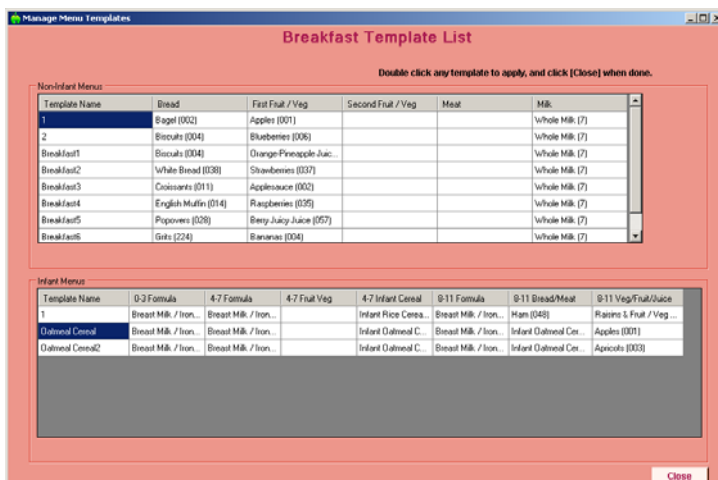
To record specific foods, the center will click on the [...] button and choose a food from the list.



Centers can record special notes for any menu, including possible food substitutions.

If a Master Menu exists, the center will see a [Use Master Menu] button, which will apply the master menu for this date/meal. Note: if no infants have been recorded in the meal count, or estimate, then only the non-infant portion of the master menu will be applied.

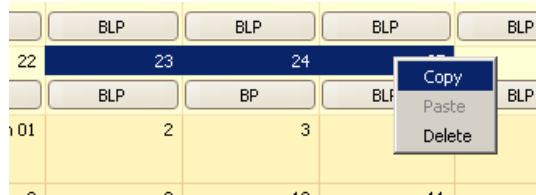
A center can apply a menu template to any meal by clicking [Use Menu Template], which will bring up a list of menu templates to choose from:



To use a menu template, double click on any menu you want to apply. If you only want to apply a non-infants template, then once you double click the template choice, click the [Close] button. If you apply both, the screen will close automatically after you have

chosen both an infant & non-infant menu.

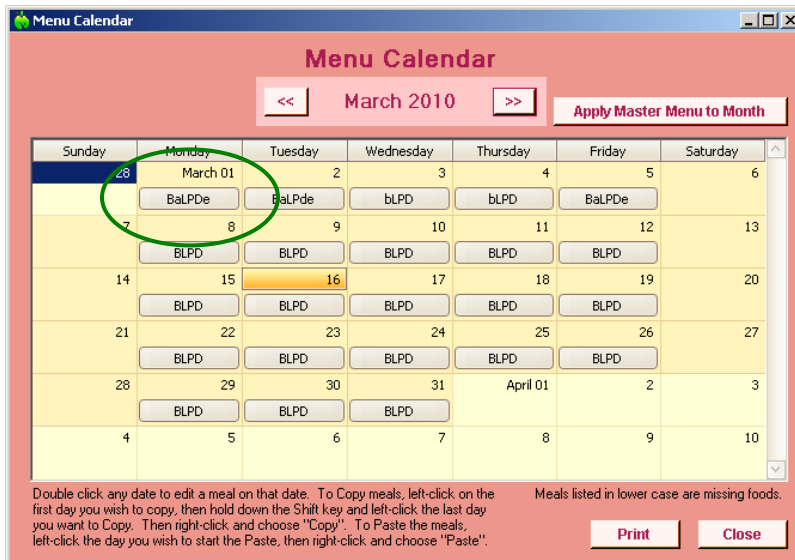
Back on the Menu Calendar, you can right click any date or range of dates in the calendar to copy & paste one or more day's menu plan(s) to any other date (or range):



Click the **[Print]** button on the Menu Calendar to get your **Center Monthly Menu Plan**. You can also go to **Reports >> Menus >> Center Weekly Menu Plan** for a weekly view. These reports are useful to share with parents.

Minute Menu can be configured so that when planning menus, the process is open-ended, allowing menus to be recorded without all the required components. Or it can be configured to warn centers when recording menus that are missing components. Or it can be configured to prevent centers from recording menus that are missing components. These choices are controlled in Administration >> Manage Policies, via policies M10 and M10b.

If you do choose to warn centers about menus that are missing, the Menu Calendar may list certain meals in lower case to indicate required components are missing:



In this example, several meals in the first week of the month are missing required component. See the lower case “a” and “e” for March 1st, indicating that AM Snack and Evening Snack have been recorded but don't have all the required components.

Computing Required Quantities

Once a menu has been planned in Minute Menu, the system can give you a Menu Production Record for that day. The Menu Production Record will initially have just the foods chosen for the menu, and the per-serving quantity requirements for those foods, based upon USDA guidelines.

However, the Menu Production Record can give you two additional automatically computed quantity measurements, based upon:

- (1) meal count estimates (for meals that haven't yet happened)
- (2) actual meal counts (for meals that have already been served)

Estimating Attendance

If you provide an estimate for the number of children you expect to serve, Minute Menu will tell you how much food you'll need to prepare for that meal.

You can estimate attendance by clicking [Estimate Attendance] while recording a menu plan. You can also access it from Menus / Attendance >> Estimate Attendance.

You can type in a specific number of children you expect to serve, broken down by age group, for each meal of the selected date. To make life easier, though, the system will plug in numbers for you automatically, assuming you've recorded at least one set of estimates before, or assuming you've recorded at least one day's attendance / meal counts before. If that's the case, click [Auto Calculate], and numbers will fill in automatically. If you expect the numbers for one day in the week to fluctuate a bit, you can use the [Auto Calculate] to match the same day of the week in the prior week.

Once you have recorded your estimates, click [Save]. Then [Print Menu Production Record]. This time, the Menu Production Record will show you the counts of children you have estimated, along with the quantities of food required based upon those counts:

		1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	6-12 Yrs	Adults	Total	
Breakfast	Estimated Attendance	5	5	10	0	20	
	Actual Attendance						
Component	Food Served/Planned	Rqd Serving Size By Age				Qty Needed Per Est Attendance	Qty Needed Per Actual Attendance
		1-2	3-5	6-12	Adult		
Brd/Alt	Bran Chex	1/4 c	1/3 c	3/4 c	1 1/2 c	10.41 c	
Veg/Frt/Juice	Cantaloupe	1/4 c	1/2 c	1/2 c	1/2 c	8 3/4 c	
Milk	Fluid Milk	1/2 c	3/4 c	1 c	1 c	1.02 gal	

Once you've saved an estimate, you'll also notice an [Apply to Rest of Month] button. Click this button, and the current day's estimates will be applied to every other day in the month that has a menu planned. If no menus have been planned yet for the rest of the month, this button will do nothing. Note: you can still tweak an individual day's meal count estimates after you run this

function, but don't tweak numbers and then run this function later. The reason is that each time you run this it overwrites all your other estimates in a month so you'll lose your changes.

Weekly Quantity Requirements

With menus planned for a month (or a week), and estimates entered for a month (or a week), you can run the Weekly Quantities Required report to get a list of every individual food you plan to serve, and the total quantities required during that period. It serves as a great shopping list. Go to **Reports >> Menus >> Weekly Quantities Required**

Note For Central Kitchens

For agencies with a central kitchens, if your centers record their own estimates, even with a single menu plan, you can use the Weekly Quantities Required – All Centers to find out how much to prepare for all your centers. You can also run the **Reports >> Attendance >> Estimated Meal Count Summary** to get a breakdown of head counts estimated for any individual center.

Using Actual Meal Counts

To record actual meal counts, a center will click [Record Attendance] on their toolbar and using the Record Daily Attendance / Meal Counts function. (This information can also be scanned).

Once those meal counts have been entered, you can again print the Menu Production Record, which this time will have quantities required based upon the number of children served. It will also report those same meal counts:

Breakfast		1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	6-12 Yrs	Adults	Total	
Estimated Attendance		5	5	10	0	20	
Actual Attendance		4	5	11	1	21	
Component	Food Served/Planned	Rqd Serving Size By Age				Qty Needed Per Est Attendance	Qty Needed Per Actual Attendance
		1-2	3-5	6-12	Adult		
Brd/Alt	Bran Chex	1/4 c	1/3 c	3/4 c	1 1/2 c	10.41 c	12.41 c
Veg/Frt/Juice	Cantaloupe	1/4 c	1/2 c	1/2 c	1/2 c	8 3/4 c	9 1/2 c
Milk	Fluid Milk	1/2 c	3/4 c	1 c	1 c	1.02 gal	1.05 gal

Note for Central Kitchens

If a site submits an estimated meal count to you that is substantially different than the actual number of children that it serves (and claims), you could be losing money: either you're not preparing enough food so some children can't be served and claimed, so you end up short-changing yourself on food program reimbursements; or you're preparing too much food and wasting money on food costs. Use the **Reports >> Attendance >> Actual vs Estimate Meal Count Comparison** to identify any sites that have substantial problems when submitting estimates.

Changing Foods & Calculation Rules

Your agency controls the list of all of the foods listed in Minute Menu. You also control the per-serving quantity requirements for any individual food. You can change this information at any time by going to Administration >> Manage Foods.

Please note a couple limitations when using this feature:

- When you save food changes, you'll need to close Minute Menu and re-open it. Each time Minute Menu opens, it reads the list of foods, so this list will only be refreshed if you close & re-open the software, no matter when you save changes via the Manage Foods function.
- Quantities are calculated on menus when the menu is saved, or when the estimated meal counts are saved, or when the actual meal counts & attendance is saved. They are not re-calculated automatically when you save changes to quantity rules via the Manage Foods function. So if you change a food's quantity rules and then immediately re-print a Menu Production Record, you will see the food's per-serving requirement reflect what was just saved in Manage Foods, but you won't see the Qty Needed values change unless you re-save the menu.

Tracking Actual Quantities Prepared / Offered

Minute Menu will automatically display the per-serving quantity requirement, and automatically calculate both an estimate of quantity required, and actual quantity required – and it will display all three of these quantity measurements on the Menu Production Record. But the software also allows you to record what the cook actually prepared. This isn't a computed value – it's just a reflection of how much was prepared/offered when the meal was served. This is never known in the future; you only know this once you actually prepare the meal.

Some states require this information to be documented on the Menu Production Record. If this information isn't required, we recommend you ignore it completely. However, if you are required to have this information on the Menu Production Record, you can. Make sure the feature is enabled via Administration >> Manage Policies, with policy M01.

Assuming it is enabled, then when you access the Record Menus function for a date that isn't in the future, you'll have the ability to record the actual quantities prepared/offered:

If you choose a date in the future, you won't see any of these white data entry boxes – because you can't record what you don't yet know.

So after any meal is served, the cook can use this screen to record

Record Menu

Select Date: Thursday, April 30, 2009 Meal: Breakfast Meal Time: 8:00a - 9:00a

Non - Infant Foods

Food	Qty	Unit
Bread / Alt: Bran Chex (041)	14	cups (c)
Fruit / Juice / Veg: Cantaloupe (006)	10	cups (c)
Milk: Fluid Milk (7)	1.25	gallons (gal)

Infant Foods

Age Group	Food	Qty	Unit
0-3 Months	Breast Milk / Formula	4	ounces fluid (l)
4-7 Months	Breast Milk / Formula		
	Infant Cereal		
8-11 Months	Breast Milk / Formula		
	Inf Cereal / Meat / Alt		
	Fruit / Veg		

Meal Counts

	Actuals	Estimates
Infants 0-3 mo:	1	0
Infants 4-7 mo:	0	0
Infants 8-11 mo:	0	0
1-2 yr:	4	5
3-5 yr:	5	5
6-12 yr:	11	10
Adults:	1	0

Buttons: Use Master Menu, Use Menu Template

Special Notes: Non-Infants: Brad served soy milk. Infants:

Buttons: Estimate Attendance, Menu Production Record, Weekly Menu Report, Delete, Save, Close

the actual quantity prepared/ offered.

If you print the Menu Production Record again, you'll see this information reflected on the report, as well as all the other quantity information:

Breakfast		1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	6-12 Yrs	Adults	Total	Total Including Infants		
		Estimated Attendance	5	5	10	0			20
		Actual Attendance	4	5	11	1	21	22	
Component	Food Served/Planned	Rqd Serving Size By Age				Qty Needed Per Est Attendance	Qty Needed Per Actual Attendance	Actual Qty Prepared	Comments
Brd/Alt	Bran Chex	1/4 c	1/3 c	3/4 c	1 1/2 c	10.41 c	12.41 c	14 c	Brand served soy milk.
Veg/Frt/Juice	Cantaloupe	1/4 c	1/2 c	1/2 c	1/2 c	8 3/4 c	9 1/2 c	10 c	
Milk	Fluid Milk	1/2 c	3/4 c	1 c	1 c	1.02 gal	1.05 gal	1 1/4 gal	

Claim Edit Checks

As long as you enter menu information into the software, when Minute Menu processes your claims, it will examine that menu information in detail to ensure compliance with USDA rules. Some agencies may choose not to enter menu plans into Minute Menu. If this is the case, be sure to disable Minute Menu's menu-based edit checks. Go to Administration >> Manage Policy, and set policy M02.

Assuming that you don't skip these menu based edit checks, there are several of them. For a comprehensive list of menu-specific errors that can be listed on the OER when you process a claim, see the **Minute Menu CX Claim Errors** help document. For errors specifically related to quantity checks, see errors #60, 78, 79. For warnings related to special notes or "Other" foods recorded on menus, see errors #83 and 29. And there are several more basic food checks, including errors # 15-24, 27, 28, 33, and 38.

Finally, you may want to also review the **Milk Audit** help document, for details specific to the milk component of menus.