MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES
Beef

Prevent excessive leftovers by using "just in time" service. When reheating a product for service, follow time-temperature guidelines. Products lose quality when reheated.

As products change on the order guide, refer to package instructions for cooking time, temperatures, and procedures. Use the CN label or product information from the manufacturer to determine the amount to serve to meet meal pattern requirements

Ounces and pounds in recipes refer to the weight of an ingredient or a serving. Volume measures are indicated in fluid ounces or cups, pints, quarts, gallons, or packages. Do not confuse a weight measure for a fluid measure.

Use the Quality Score Cards from *Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals* to evaluate the recipes.

Culinary Pointers from *Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals*

Most processed meat products are at their peak of quality immediately after they are cooked.

If a processed product must be held, follow package directions exactly and plan the holding time to be as short as possible. Holding time will only decrease the quality of the product.

- Breaded products – These products should not be held if possible. Depending on the type of warmer available, the product may or may not be covered. If it must be covered, use aluminum foil with many small holes so steam can escape.
- Non-breaded products – These products can be held more successfully than breaded products. Cover cooked products with aluminum foil and place in a warmer.

Cooking always causes loss of moisture. This is called shrinkage. As a meat continues to cook, it loses more moisture. This is why it is so important to follow the recipe for cooking temperature and cooking time. Overcooking a meat dish means the yield will be less than the number of portions planned, flavor will be lost, and the meat will be tough because the protein structure has been changed. [CT, Preparing Meat and Poultry, page 4]

To obtain a tender product, it is best to cook meat and poultry at a moderate temperature. The recipe will give the temperature for the product. A rule of thumb is to cook meat and poultry in a conventional oven at 350°F. Both the time and temperature should be adjusted in a convection oven. Generally the temperature for a convection oven should be reduced from 25° to 50°F from that of a conventional oven. The time may need to be reduced also, about 25 percent less cooking time. [CT, Preparing Meat and Poultry, Page 4.]

Pasta gets bigger and heavier when it is cooked. Generally pasta doubles or triples in weight when it is cooked. Likewise, the volume increases two and two and one-half times during cooking. When pasta is to be cooked more in a recipe, like macaroni and cheese, it should be undercooked. This means reducing the cooking time. [CT, Preparing Pasta, Rice, and Grains, Page 4.]