

“Take Home” Meals from Congregate Meal Sites

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“Take home” meals from congregate meal sites are not eligible for Administration on Aging (AoA) funding because they are not provided in a congregate setting. See Section 331 (2) of the Older Americans Act.

The California Department of Aging (CDA) allowed some flexibility for “take home” meals, primarily those for AoA funded congregate meal participants who are assessed to need a second meal or for a regular congregate participant who is unable to attend the meal site because of a brief (three days or less) illness.

AAAs may develop a clear policy about “take home” meals from congregate meal sites. Elements to consider when developing policy:

1. Clients must meet the eligibility requirements for Congregate Meals.
2. Clients must complete the Title III C-1 intake process including the Nutrition Risk Assessment. (A high score on the Nutrition Risk Assessment may be used to justify second meals)
3. The client has difficulty preparing nutritious meals for themselves on days when meals are not served.
4. The client must have participated in the congregate program on the day they take home a meal, and meet assessment criteria to take a second meal home for later.
5. An eligible client who has social or behavioral challenges that may impair them from attending congregate meals, may be considered for a “take home” meal.
6. All food safety rules in handling and packing the meal must be followed. Meals should be packed in an insulated container to help retain heat/cold. If a client is not going straight home, the meal should first be chilled, and then placed in an insulated container. Clients should be encouraged to transport the meal in an ice chest or insulated bag.
7. “Take home” meals must be accompanied with instructions for safe storage and reheating.
8. To assure that meals meet nutrient standards, all “take home” meals must contain the same meal components as the congregate menu for the day it was prepared.

Please contact your CDA dietitian if you have any questions about “take home” meals.