

NMSD Nutrition Services Department

Nutrition Notes for our Families: Special Dietary Needs

FOOD ALLERGIES

The New Mexico School for the Deaf Nutrition Services Department realizes that food allergies are a very serious issue and require careful attention with guidance from qualified medical professionals. Food allergies affect between 4 and 6% of children in the US, and for some they can result in severe and life threatening reactions. The NMSD Nutrition Services Department will make every effort to accommodate the special diets required of students who have food allergies documented by a qualified medical provider. This is supported by USDA Regulation 7 CFR Part 15b, stating that documentation from a licensed physician must include:

- The child's disability
- The explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet
- The major life activity affected by the disability
- The food(s) to be eliminated from the child's diet; and
- The food(s) or choice of foods that must be substituted

It is common, best practice that the NMSD Nutrition Services Manager and the NMSD Health Center work closely with the family and the physician of students with food allergies to obtain the specific medical guidance that is needed to adhere to the prescribed dietary requirements.

FOOD INTOLERANCES

NMSD also requires a physician's statement in the case of food intolerances. This is in the best interest of the student so that their needs can be met carefully and appropriately according to medical guidance.

Once medical documentation is provided to the NMSD Health Center and / or the Nutrition Services Manager for either a food allergy or intolerance, these departments will work collaboratively with the student's parents / guardians to develop a Dietary Plan that meets the needs of the student. If NMSD Health / Nutrition Staff feel the need for further clarification from the student's physician, parents / guardians will be contacted so that permission can be arranged.

DIETARY DIVERSITY

There are two instances in which NMSD can allow food substitutions without medical documentation:

1. Vegetarian Diets
2. The substitution of USDA approved soy milk for cow's milk

Although we will always attempt to create vegetarian meals that are similar to those being consumed by all students, the vegetarian meal options will be at the discretion of the NMSD Nutrition Services Department due to factors involving product availability and meal preparation for group service. If your student would like either of these two accommodations above, please work directly with the NMSD Nutrition Services Manager to arrange for these accommodations.

We apologize that we cannot make accommodations for food preferences.

Please feel free to contact Laurie Allocca, NMSD Nutrition Services Manager, at (505) 476-6347 / laurie.allocca@nmsd.k12.nm.us for dialogue about special dietary needs, or for any nutrition related information.