

Managing Food Allergies in the Cafeteria:

The role of school food service managers and staff



Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs

Revised November 2023

About this Presentation

This presentation provides general guidance regarding the requirements for meal modifications for food allergies in the school nutrition programs

- Public schools
- Private schools
- Residential child care institutions (RCCIs)



About this Presentation

For specific questions or technical assistance, please contact the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)



School Nutrition Programs

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP
- Special Milk Program (SMP)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Nutrition-Programs>

Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|--|
| CGS | Connecticut General Statutes |
| CNPs | Child Nutrition Programs |
| CSDE | Connecticut State Department of Education |
| LEA | local educational authority |
| NSLP | National School Lunch Program |
| SBP | School Breakfast Program |
| SFA | school food authority |
| SNPs | school nutrition programs |
| USDA | U.S. Department of Agriculture |

Objectives

- Provide an overview of the federal nondiscrimination laws regarding meal modifications in school nutrition programs
- Identify SFA responsibilities for meal modifications for children with food allergies
- Discuss four actions for school food service staff to maintain safe eating environments for children with food allergies
- Access food allergy resources for school food service staff

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Overview of Federal Nondiscrimination Laws and Requirements



Federal Nondiscrimination Laws

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008
- USDA Nondiscrimination Regulations (7 CFR 15b)

Ensure children with disabilities have **access** to USDA's CNPs





Disabilities Definition (ADA)

- A *physical or mental impairment* that *substantially limits* one or more *major life activities* **OR**
- A *record* of such an impairment **OR**
- Being *regarded* as having such an impairment



Disabilities Definition (ADA)

- Food allergies are generally *considered to be a disability*, even if they are not life-threatening or severe
- Individualized assessment (case-by-case basis)

ADA Amendments Act (2008)

Expanded Definition of Disability

New category

Major life activities

- Caring for one's self
- Performing manual tasks
- Seeing
- Hearing
- *Eating*
- Sleeping
- Walking
- Standing
- Lifting
- Bending
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Reading
- Concentrating
- Thinking
- Communicating
- Working



Major bodily functions

- *Immune system*
- Normal cell growth
- *Digestive*
- *Bowel*
- *Bladder*
- Neurological
- Brain
- Respiratory
- Circulatory
- Endocrine
- Reproductive

Examples of Disabilities that May Require Meal Modifications *

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autism• Cancer• Celiac disease• Cerebral palsy• Diabetes• <i>Food allergies (including non-life-threatening)</i>• Food intolerances, e.g., lactose, gluten | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heart disease• Metabolic disorders• Obesity• Phenylketonuria (PKU)• Seizure disorder• Certain temporary disabilities |
|--|---|

* Not all-inclusive and might not require meal modifications for all children (case-by-case basis)

USDA Nondiscrimination Requirements

- Children with disabilities must be able to *participate in* and *receive benefits from* programs that are available to children without disabilities



USDA Nondiscrimination Requirements

- SFAs must provide a *reasonable** modification if disability restricts child's diet

* A change or alteration in policies, practices, and/or procedures to *accommodate a disability* that ensures children with disabilities have *equal opportunity* to participate in or benefit from a program



Requirements for Meal Modifications

- Must be based on *recognized medical authority's diagnosis* of child's medical condition



Requirements for Meal Modifications

- Must be *documented* with a medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority **OR**
 - Individualized Education Program (IEP) Plan
 - Section 504 Plan



Recognized Medical Authority

A state-licensed health care professional *authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law* and recognized by Connecticut State Department of Public Health

- Physicians (MD)
- Physician assistants (PA or PAC)
- Doctors of osteopathy (DO)
- Advanced practice registered nurses (APRN)

Cannot accept medical statements
signed by any other individuals

Medical Statement

- Must include 3 elements
 1. *Information* about child's physical or mental impairment (disability) that is sufficient to allow the SFA to understand how the impairment restricts the child's diet
 2. An *explanation* of what must be done to accommodate the child's disability
 3. If appropriate, the *food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives*

Medical Statement

- Not required when meals meet the meal patterns

Example: Substituting foods from the same component, such as chicken for cheese

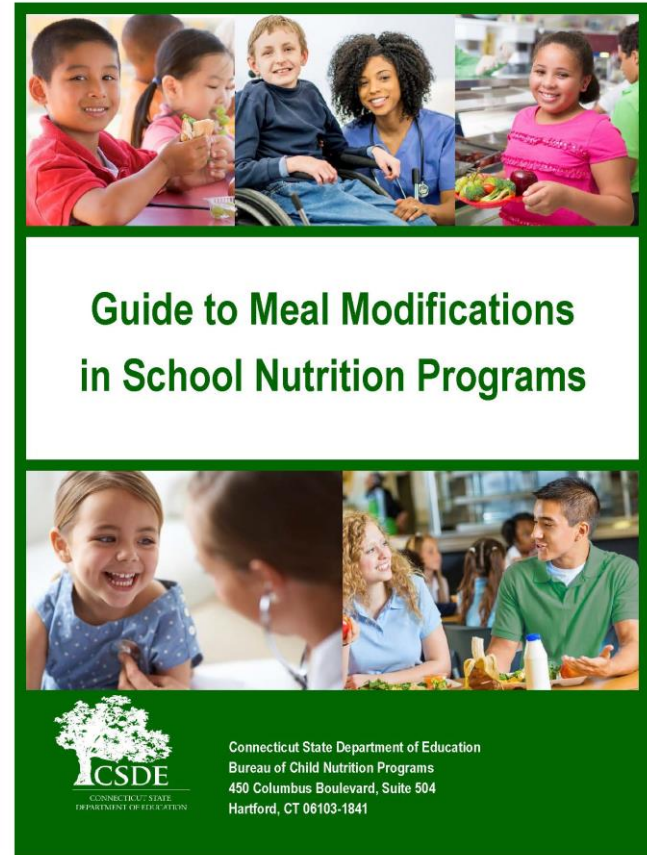


- ***Best practice recommendation:***
Obtain medical statement to ensure clear communication about modifications within the meal patterns

CSDE Resource

Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs

- Required meal modifications for children with a disability
- Optional meal modifications for children without a disability



CSDE Presentation

Requirements for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs



Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education
Child Nutrition Programs

Connecticut State Department of Education • Revised March 2022

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https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/Managing_Food_Allergies_in_Cafeteria_SNP_Presentation.pdf

CSDE Webpage

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

- Guides (USDA and CSDE)
- Memos (USDA and CSDE)
- Summary of requirements
- Presentation
- Policy development
- Resources

The screenshot shows the official website of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The page is titled "Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs". On the left, there is a navigation menu with links: Overview, What's Next, Documents/Forms, Related Resources, Laws/Regulations, and Contact. Below the menu, it says "Provided by: Department of Education". The main content area has a sub-header "Overview" and a list of links: School Nutrition Programs, Program Guidance, Forms, Resources, and Nutrition Education. The text explains that the CSDE provides information and guidance for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Special Milk Program (SMP). It also discusses requirements for children with disabilities and children without disabilities, and provides a list of CSDE guidance documents.

Connecticut's Official State Website

Search Connecticut Government...

HOME / DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION / SPECIAL DIETS IN SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

Overview

[School Nutrition Programs](#) | [Program Guidance](#) | [Forms](#) | [Resources](#) | [Nutrition Education](#)

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) provides information and guidance for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs on providing meals for children with special dietary needs, based on federal laws and USDA regulations. School nutrition programs include the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#), [Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\)](#) of the NSLP, [Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\)](#) of the NSLP, [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program \(FFVP\)](#), and [Special Milk Program \(SMP\)](#).

Children with a Disability

The USDA **requires** reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on a medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. The Connecticut State Department of Public Health defines a recognized medical authority as licensed physicians (doctors of medicine or osteopathy), physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), including nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs.

Children without a Disability

The USDA **allows**, but does not require, meal modifications for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability, including those related to religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences, such as a preference that a child eats a gluten-free diet because a parent believes it is better for the child. SFAs may choose to make these accommodations on a case-by-case basis. All meal modifications for children without disabilities in grades K-12 must comply with the USDA [meal patterns for grades K-12](#) and all meal modifications for preschoolers without disabilities must comply with the USDA [meal patterns for preschoolers](#).

The CSDE encourages school nutrition programs to develop a written policy and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for special dietary accommodations in school meals. For information on developing policies, click on [What's Next](#) in the left navigation bar.

CSDE Guidance

- [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities](#)
- [Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [CSDE Operational Memo No. 13-17](#) : Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs
- [Self-assessment of Local Practices for Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Summary of Requirements for Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Managing Food Allergies in the Cafeteria



Preventing Allergic Reactions

The only way to prevent an allergic reaction is to *avoid exposure* to the allergen

Remember: Even a tiny amount of an allergen can cause a severe and potentially life-threatening reaction



Terms to Know

Food allergy

An exaggerated response by the immune system to a food that the body mistakenly identifies as being harmful

Allergen

A food protein that triggers an immune response and causes an allergic reaction



Managing Food Allergies in the Cafeteria

- Can often be accommodated within meal patterns

Example: If a child has an allergy to a specific fruit or vegetable, SFA may substitute another fruit or vegetable in the meal



Managing Food Allergies in the Cafeteria

- Follow *district's food allergy management plan* for children with life-threatening food allergies



Managing Food Allergies in the Cafeteria

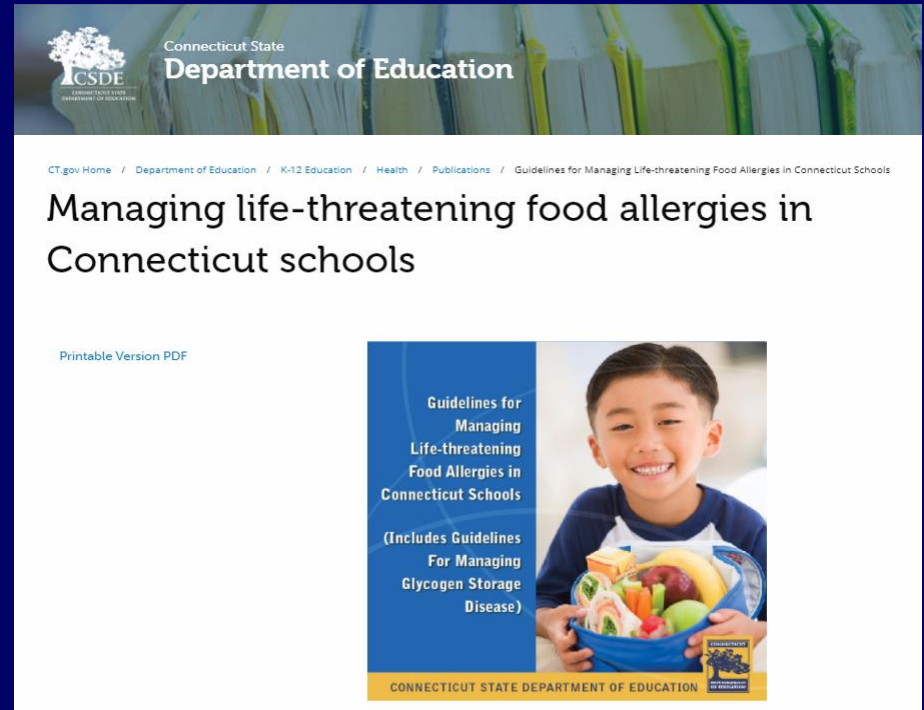
- District's food allergy management plan is required by Connecticut General Statute 10-212c
 - Must be based on CSDE's guidelines



CSDE Resource

Guidelines for Managing Life-threatening Food Allergies in Connecticut Schools

Includes roles and responsibilities for school nurse and school food service staff



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/Managing-Life-Threatening-Food-Allergies-in-Connecticut-Schools>

Managing Food Allergies in the Cafeteria

- Follow other applicable district requirements and guidance
 - Food service policies
 - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)



SFA's Overall Responsibilities for Food Allergies

1. Provide a *safe meal* and *safe environment* to consume the meal



SFA's Overall Responsibilities for Food Allergies

2. Ensure modified meals *meet each child's prescribed guidelines* and are free of all ingredients suspected of causing an allergic reaction



SFA's Overall Responsibilities for Food Allergies

3. Use *proper storage, preparation, and cleaning techniques* to prevent exposure to allergens through cross-contact



SFA's Overall Responsibilities for Food Allergies

4. Make *nutrition information* available to students, families, school nurses, and others as needed



What Food Service Managers and Staff Can Do: Four Key Actions



Overview of Four Key Actions

1. Recognize students with food allergies
2. Read food labels
3. Prevent cross-contact of possible food allergens
4. Promote communication and teamwork



Four Key Actions for School Food Service Staff

1

Recognize Students



Recognize Students

- Follow district procedures for identifying students with food allergies
- Get to know and recognize students with food allergies

You are the first line of defense in ensuring safe meals for students!





Laws for Identifying Students

Federal laws do **not** allow

Outward identification of students whose disability requires a meal modification

Example: Posting lists of students' dietary needs in public areas



Laws for Identifying Students

Federal laws do **not** allow

Asking students or parents to *relinquish confidential medical information* through outward identification

Example: Asking students or their parents to consent to a physical designation, such as wearing a lanyard, bracelet, pin, sticker, or similar item



Laws for Identifying Students

- District policies and practices must
 - *protect privacy* of children who have a disability
 - *maintain confidentiality* of each child's medical condition

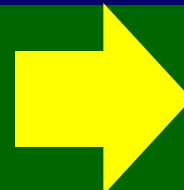


Laws for Identifying Students

Federal
laws
allow

Sharing of confidential
student information
among school staff for
*legitimate educational
interest*, such as meal
modifications

School nurse



School food service

USDA Recommended Practices for Identifying Students



- Conduct *daily pre-service meeting with food service staff* to review all menu items and potential allergens
 - All servers and cashiers must be able to *identify menu items* that should be avoided for certain dietary restrictions

USDA Recommended Practices for Identifying Students



- Use *point-of-sales (POS)* cash register system
 - Watch for alerts
 - Do not allow students to take any items that might contain their allergen

USDA Recommended Practices for Identifying Students



- Maintain students' confidentiality by focusing on *identifying meals* that meet specific dietary criteria, e.g., lactose-free, nut-free
 - Use different colored plates or trays
 - Use colored tags or labels, placards, or similar signage

USDA Recommended Practices for Identifying Students



- Post information about students' dietary needs in locations *visible only to school food service staff*
 - Kitchen
 - Behind counters and serving lines

USDA Recommended Practices for Identifying Students



- Provide *ongoing communication to parents* to explain
 - district's procedures for meal modifications
 - school menus
 - how cafeteria ensures allergen-free meals

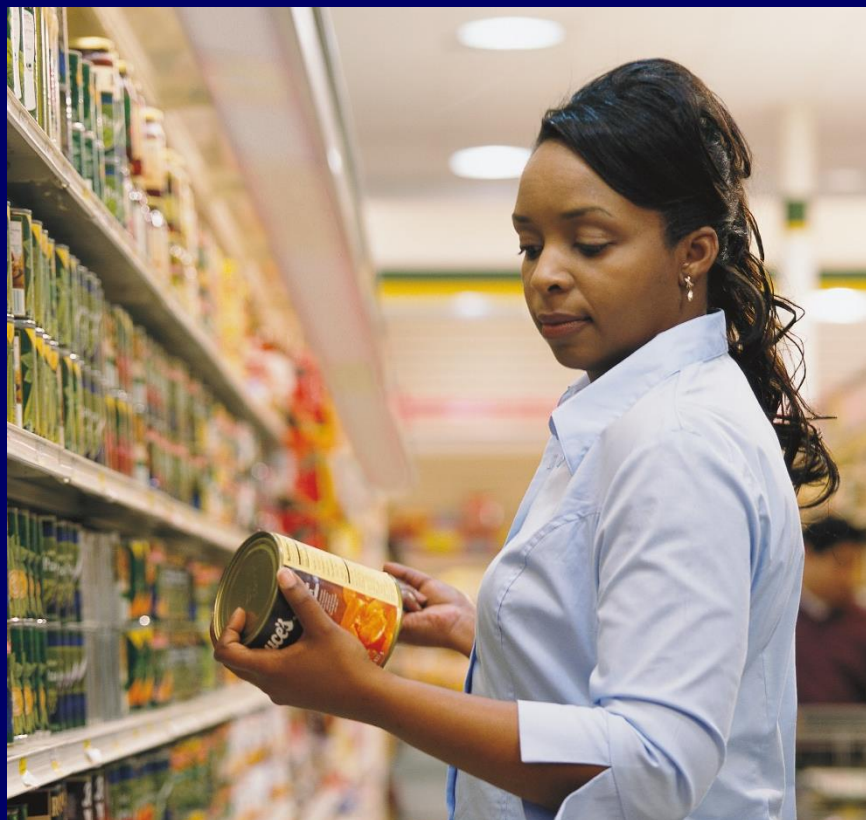
Parent forums or meetings
District policy
Website

E-mails
Newsletters
Menu backs

Four Key Actions for School Food Service Staff

2

Read Food Labels



Know What to Avoid

- Understand *how* to read food labels
- *Read all food labels* for potential food allergens
 - Check labels *each time* a food is purchased



Know What to Avoid

- *Check* with manufacturer if unsure about an ingredient
 - Consumer hotlines
- *Maintain* food labels and recipes on file



Work with Vendors to Obtain Food Labels

- Maintain *vendor contact* information to access food label information
- *Check deliveries* to ensure correct items are received



Work with Vendors to Obtain Food Labels

- Ensure that vendors *alert school food service staff* before making product substitutions
 - Read labels for all new products to check for potential allergens



Food Allergen Labeling Laws

2004: Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA)

Identifies *8 major food allergens* required on food labels (milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans)

2021: Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education and Research (FASTER) Act

Requires that *sesame* must be labeled on packaged foods beginning *January 1, 2023*

FALCPA: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-allergensgluten-free-guidance-documents-regulatory-information/food-allergen-labeling-and-consumer-protection-act-2004-questions-and-answers>

FASTER Act: <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ11/PLAW-117publ11.pdf>

Eight Major FALCPA Allergens + Sesame

1. Milk
2. Eggs
3. Peanuts
4. Tree nuts, e.g., almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts
5. Wheat
6. Fish, e.g., bass, flounder, trout, cod, salmon
7. Crustacean shellfish, e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp
8. Soy
9. Sesame



Three Ways to Identify Allergens



1. In *ingredients list*, using allergen's common name

Examples

Milk, cod, shrimp, walnuts

Three Ways to Identify Allergens



2. In *ingredients list in parentheses*, when ingredient is a less common form of the allergen

Example

Ingredients: Whey protein (milk), lecithin (soy), cherry, sugar, natural flavors (almond), salt.

Three Ways to Identify Allergens



3. Using the word *“contains”* followed by name of allergen

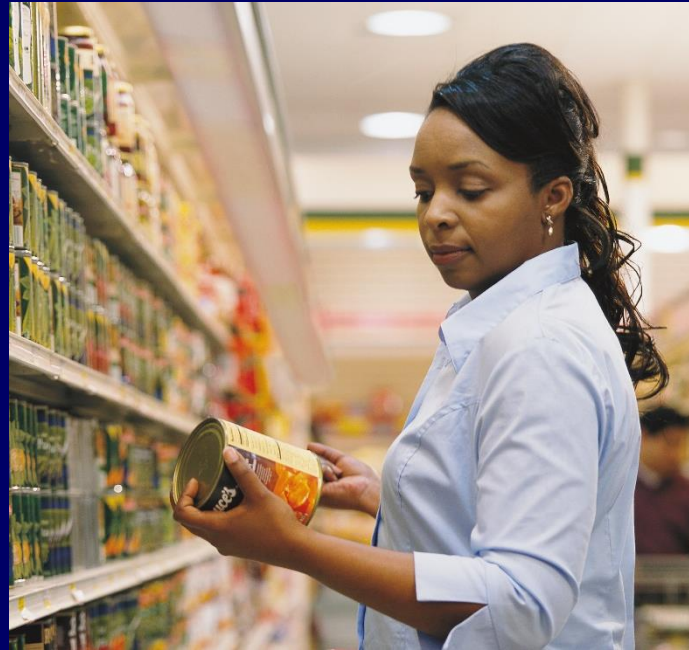
- Listed after ingredients

Example

Ingredients: Whey protein, lecithin, cherry, sugar, natural flavors, salt. *Contains: Milk, soy, and almond.*

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

Indicate the major allergen for each ingredient



Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|------------|----------|
| Albumin | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a Name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | soy |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | soy |
| Vitellin | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | soy |
| Vitellin | egg |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | soy |
| Vitellin | egg |
| Whey | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | soy |
| Vitellin | egg |
| Whey | milk |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | soy |
| Vitellin | egg |
| Whey | milk |
| Tahini | |

Knowledge Check: What's in a name?

| Ingredient | Allergen |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Albumin | egg |
| Bulgur | wheat |
| Casein | milk |
| Peanut protein hydrolysate | peanuts |
| Textured vegetable protein | soy |
| Vitellin | egg |
| Whey | milk |
| Tahini | sesame |

Precautionary Language on Food Labels

May contain..."

"Processed in a facility that also processes..."

"Made on equipment with..."

- Voluntary for manufacturers
- Not regulated
- *May or may not indicate* if product unintentionally contains (or has come in contact with) a specific allergen



“___-free” Statements for the 8 Allergens



Peanut-free



Egg-free

- Phrases like “peanut-free” and “egg-free” are *not regulated*
- Always contact manufacturer if unsure

“Gluten-free” Labeling of Foods



- Different from allergen labeling
- FDA labeling requirements for voluntary use of “gluten-free”
 - 2013: Gluten-Free Labeling of Foods
 - 2020: Gluten-Free Labeling of Fermented or Hydrolyzed Foods

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/08/05/2013-18813/food-labeling-gluten-free-labeling-of-foods>

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/08/13/2020-17088/food-labeling-gluten-free-labeling-of-fermented-or-hydrolyzed-foods>

Natural Flavors

Spice

Fruit or fruit juice

Vegetable or vegetable juice

Edible yeast

Herb

Bark

Bud

Root

Leaf or similar plant material

Meat

Seafood

Poultry

Eggs

Dairy products

- Can hide many potential food allergens
- FALCPA requires natural flavors to list the 8 allergens
- For other allergens, check with manufacturer



Knowledge Check: How many allergens?

Roasted peanuts, corn syrup, sugar, whole grain oats, dark chocolate chunks (sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, natural flavor), palm kernel oil, rice flour, almonds, whole grain wheat, fructose, cocoa, vegetable glycerin, canola oil, salt, corn starch, barley malt extract, milk, baking soda, natural flavor, mixed tocopherols added to retain freshness.

Knowledge Check: How many allergens?

Roasted peanuts, corn syrup, sugar, whole grain oats, dark chocolate chunks (sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, natural flavor *), palm kernel oil, rice flour, almonds, whole grain wheat, fructose, cocoa, vegetable glycerin, canola oil, salt, corn starch, barley malt extract, milk, baking soda, natural flavor *, mixed tocopherols added to retain freshness.

4

- ☑ Peanuts
- ☑ Tree nuts
- ☑ Wheat
- ☑ Milk

* Check with manufacturer about natural flavor

Knowledge Check: How many allergens?

Whole wheat flour, sugar, enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), margarine (palm oil, butter [cream, salt], water, contains 2% or less of salt, mono & diglycerides, natural flavor, citric acid, vitamin A palmitate added, beta carotene [color]), eggs, invert sugar, water, soybean oil, contains 2% or less of: mono- and diglycerides, leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate), salt, potassium chloride, natural and artificial flavor, turmeric and annatto (color). Contains wheat, milk, eggs, soy.

Knowledge Check: How many allergens?

Whole wheat flour, sugar, enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), margarine (palm oil, butter [cream, salt], water, contains 2% or less of salt, mono & diglycerides, natural flavor, citric acid, vitamin A palmitate added, beta carotene [color]), eggs, invert sugar, water, soybean oil, contains 2% or less of: mono- and diglycerides, leavening (baking soda, sodium aluminum phosphate), salt, potassium chloride, natural flavor, turmeric and annatto (color). Contains wheat, milk, eggs, soy.

4



Wheat



Eggs



Milk



Soy (in natural flavor)

Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) Resource

Understanding Food Labels English and Spanish

Understanding Food Labels



The only way to prevent a serious allergic reaction is to avoid the food allergen.

Reading every food label, every time is one of the best ways to keep you or your loved one safe. Many people who are managing food allergies use the "Rule of 3" for reading ingredient labels—read the label at the store, when unloading your groceries, and before serving the food—to triple-check that a food is safe. Others use a system of colored stickers on foods in the pantry or refrigerator to indicate that an adult has read the ingredient label and determined whether the food is safe or contains the allergen.

There are a variety of approaches that can work, and laws like the Food Allergy Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) help make it easier to understand food labels so that you can safely manage your or your child's food allergies.

What is FALCPA?

This law requires that food labels show in plain English when a "major food allergen" or any ingredient that contains protein from a major food allergen is added as an ingredient in that product.

What foods have to be labeled?

Imported (when sold in the United States) or domestic (made in the United States) pre-packaged foods are required to have a label that lists the major food allergens when they are intentionally added as an ingredient, or when any ingredient contains protein from one of the major food allergens.

Which foods are considered major food allergens under FALCPA?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers the following foods major food allergens: milk, wheat, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, crustacean shellfish, and soy. These foods account for 90 percent of food allergy reactions in the United States.



foodallergy.org #0000

How do the labels show the major food allergens?

Manufacturers have two options to indicate a major food allergen on product labels. The first option is to list the allergen in parentheses after the ingredient. The second option is to list the allergen at the end of the ingredient list. Often this "Contains" statement is bolded. See the box below for examples of these two options.

Example 1:

Ingredients: Whey protein (milk), lecithin (soy), cherry, sugar, natural flavors (almond), salt.

Example 2:

Ingredients: Whey protein, lecithin, cherry, sugar, natural flavors, salt.
Contains: Milk, soy, and almond.

Does the label have to include the "Contains" statement at the end with the major allergens bolded?

No. The "Contains" statement is one of two options that food manufacturers have for listing the presence of major food allergens.

Should we avoid products with precautionary warnings (e.g., May contain...)?

Most allergists recommend avoiding these products. Studies have shown that some of the products actually do contain allergens in amounts significant enough to cause an allergic reaction.

Tips for Avoiding Your Allergen

English and Spanish

<https://www.foodallergy.org/living-food-allergies/food-allergy-essentials/common-allergens/tips-avoiding-your-allergen>

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of American

Allergen Avoidance Lists (Kids with Food Allergies Webpage)

- Peanut allergy
- Tree nut allergy
- Milk allergy
- Egg allergy
- Wheat allergy
- Soy allergy

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Kids with Food Allergies website. The header includes the logo, navigation links (Home, About KFA, Living With Food Allergies, Recipes & Diet, Research, Get Involved, Latest News, Community), and buttons for 'GET SUPPORT' and 'DONATE'. A search bar is also present. The main content area is titled 'Living With Food Allergies' and features a sub-header 'Allergens'. Under 'FOOD ALLERGENS', there is a list of allergens: Peanut Allergy, Tree Nut Allergy, Milk Allergy, Egg Allergy, Soy Allergy, Wheat Allergy, and Sesame Allergy. The 'Allergen Avoidance Lists' section explains the FDA food allergen label law and provides a list of items that may use 'hidden' names: Foods that are not regulated by the FDA, Cosmetics and personal care products, Prescription and over-the-counter medications, and Pet food, toys and crafts. It also mentions that it is important to read every label, every time, and provides links to guides for finding hidden allergens. Below this, there are six images with labels: Peanut Allergy (peanuts), Tree Nut Allergy (nuts), Milk Allergy (milk splash), Egg Allergy (egg), Wheat Allergy (wheat flour), and Soy Allergy (soybeans).

KIDS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES
A Division of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

GET SUPPORT DONATE

Search: Resources ☐ Recipes ☐ Community

Home About KFA Living With Food Allergies Recipes & Diet Research Get Involved Latest News Community

Living With Food Allergies

Allergens Food Allergy Topics Newly Diagnosed Real Families Videos Webinars

FOOD ALLERGENS

- Peanut Allergy
- Tree Nut Allergy
- Milk Allergy
- Egg Allergy
- Soy Allergy
- Wheat Allergy
- Sesame Allergy

FOOD ALLERGY RECALL ALERTS

- Tree Nut (Almond) Allergy Alert: Sprouts Farmers Market Dark Chocolate Covered Cherries
- Egg, Milk, Wheat Allergy Alert: The Third Synthesis Inc DBA Chicago Sweet Connection Bakery Coffee Cakes (Various Flavors) and Paczkis (Various Flavors)

Allergen Avoidance Lists

The FDA food allergen label law requires foods to state if they contain a major food allergen (milk, egg, peanut, tree nut, wheat, soy, sesame, fish, crustacean shellfish). Foods that contain these allergens must say so in plain English. But, there are many foods and products that are not covered by the law, so it is still important to know how to read a label for allergens. Items that may use "hidden" names:

- Foods that are not regulated by the FDA
- Cosmetics and personal care products
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications
- Pet food, toys and crafts

It is important to read every label, every time. Use our guides to help you find hidden allergens in your products. Small travel-size cards are also available to print.

Peanut Allergy

Tree Nut Allergy

Milk Allergy

Egg Allergy

Wheat Allergy

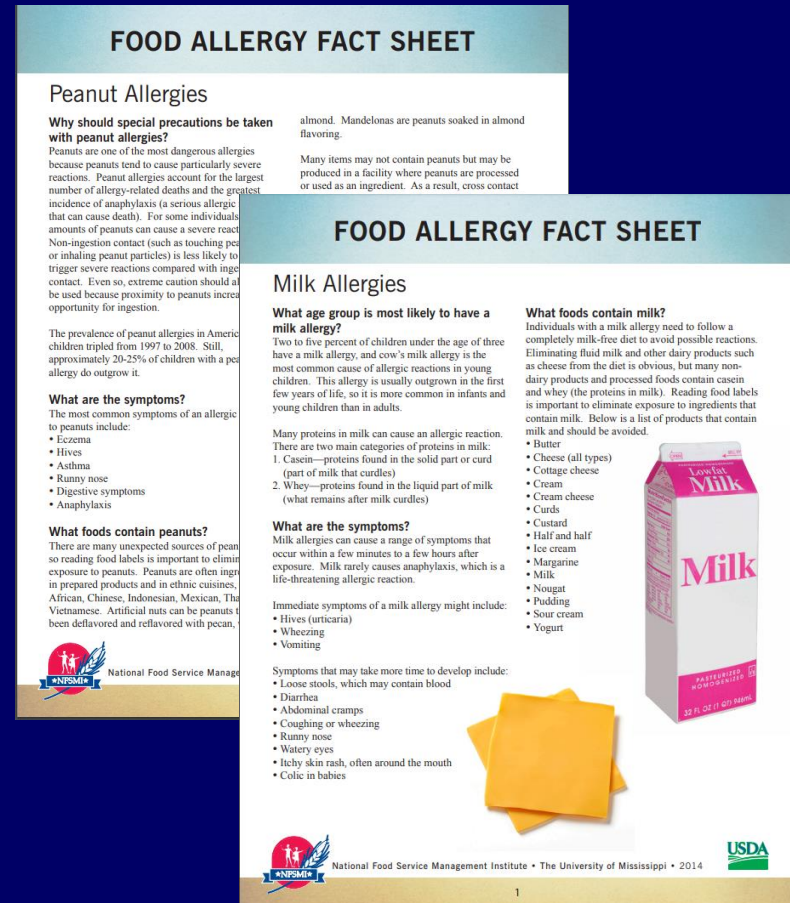
Soy Allergy

<https://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/top-food-allergens.aspx>

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Resource

Food Allergy Fact Sheets

- Egg Allergies Fact Sheet
- Fish Allergies Fact Sheet
- Milk Allergies Fact Sheet
- Peanut Allergies Fact Sheet
- Tree Nut Allergies Fact Sheet
- Shellfish Fact Sheet
- Soy Fact Sheet
- Wheat Fact Sheet



<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/food-allergy-fact-sheets>

ICN Resource

Online Training: Food Allergies in School Nutrition Programs, Part 2: Reading Food Labels



Food Allergies in SNPs – Reading Food Labels

ID: E-D19N41

- Duration: 1h - ★★★★★

ABOUT THIS COURSE

CONTENT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This course is part two of a four-part series designed to give you tips and tools for preparing and serving safe food for children with food allergies. Part two discusses reading labels for food allergens.

Intended Audience: School Nutrition Managers, School Nutrition Directors,
School Nutrition Employees/Staff, Chefs

Hours of Instruction: 1

Key Area: 2

Professional Standards Code(s): 2600

<https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/126/food-allergies-in-snps-reading-food-labels>

Four Key Actions for School Food Service Staff

3

Prevent Cross-contact



Terms to Know

Cross-contamination

Transfer of **microorganisms** from a food, person, or surface to another food

- Can cause *foodborne illness*

Cross-contact

Transfer of **allergen** from one food to another food or surface

- Can cause *allergic reaction*

Effect of Cooking



- Destroys most microorganisms

BUT

- Does *not* destroy food allergens (proteins)

SFAs must prevent cross-contact

Example of Cross-contact

- Using same spatula for peanut butter cookies and chocolate chip cookies



Example of Cross-contact



- Using a knife to make peanut butter sandwiches, wiping the knife, then using that same knife to cut a grilled cheese sandwich



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Touching almonds then
handling pasta without proper
handwashing

☐ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Touching almonds then
handling pasta without proper
handwashing

☒ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Preparing different kinds of sandwiches on the same countertop

☐ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Preparing different kinds of sandwiches on the same countertop

☒ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Steam from cooking fish or shellfish touches nearby foods

☐ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Steam from cooking fish or shellfish touches nearby foods

☒ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Using the same spatula to flip a ☐ Yes ☐ No
hamburger after a cheeseburger



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Using the same spatula to flip a ☒ Yes ☐ No
hamburger after a cheeseburger



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Cutting cheese then vegetables ☐ Yes ☐ No
on the same cutting board
without proper cleaning



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Cutting cheese then vegetables ☒ Yes ☐ No
on the same cutting board
without proper cleaning



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Cooking fish and chicken on
the same flat-top grill or in
the same pan

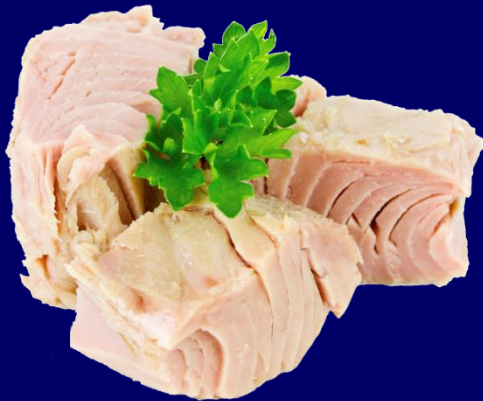
☐ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Cooking fish and chicken on the same flat-top grill or in the same pan

☒ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Dipping a knife used to spread peanut butter into a jelly jar ☐ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Dipping a knife used to spread peanut butter into a jelly jar ☒ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Milk leaking onto margarine
stored on the shelf below

☐ Yes ☐ No



Knowledge Check: Is this cross-contact?

Milk leaking onto margarine
stored on the shelf below

☒ Yes ☐ No



Preventing Cross-contact: Handwashing

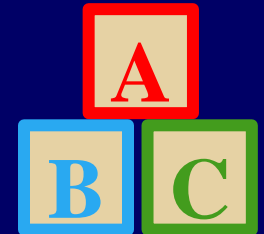
- Use *proper handwashing* during food preparation and service
- Encourage students, school staff, and volunteers to wash hands before and after handling or consuming food
- Use single-use gloves



Proper Handwashing Steps



1. Wet hands with clean running water and apply soap
2. Rub hands together, scrubbing backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails for *20 seconds*
 - Amount of time to sing “ABC” song
3. Rinse hands under running water
4. Dry hands using a clean towel, or air dry





Not Effective in Removing Allergens

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers or antibacterial gels *
- Handwashing with water alone *

* Does **not** deactivate the proteins that cause food allergy

Preventing Cross-contact: Cleaning

- Properly *clean and sanitize* all work surfaces between uses
 - Surface areas, counters, and cutting surfaces
 - Equipment and utensils
 - Pots and pans
- Use hot soapy water or all-purpose cleaning agents



Follow Proper Cleaning Procedures



- Cleaning with soap, warm water, and friction removes allergen residue

BUT

- Sanitizing to reduce microorganisms does *not* remove allergen residue

Follow Proper Cleaning Procedures



Example: After slicing cheese, clean the slicer thoroughly before slicing other foods

- Cheese protein on the slicer can contaminate the next food sliced



Follow Proper Cleaning Procedures



Example: Wash sheet pans and trays after each use even if using liners

- Oils can seep through liners and contaminate the next food cooked on the sheet pan or put on the tray



Preventing Cross-contact: Handling and Storage

- Proper *handling and storage* of food
 - Prepare food items that do not contain allergens first
 - Label and store allergen-free items separately (color coding)



Preventing Cross-contact: Handling and Storage

- Designate *allergen-safe* food preparation area
- Use *separate pans and utensils* during food preparation and service
 - Color-coded cutting boards and utensils
 - Use clean potholders, oven mitts, and aprons



FARE Resource

Prevent Cross-Contact

English and Spanish

Prevent Cross-Contact

Keep diners with food allergies safe. Even a tiny amount of an allergen can cause a severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction.

| Cross-Contact | Cross-Contamination |
|--|---|
| Occurs when an allergen is unintentionally transferred from one food to another | Occurs when microorganisms like bacteria contaminate food |
| Can cause food allergy reactions | Can cause foodborne illnesses |
| Proper cooking does NOT reduce or eliminate the chances of a food allergy reaction | Proper cooking may reduce or eliminate the chances of foodborne illness |



Always wash hands and change gloves between preparing different menu items



Clean and sanitize surfaces between every menu item: countertops, cutting boards, flat-top grills, etc.



Always use clean kitchen tools for food preparation: pots, baking sheets, utensils, cutting boards, etc.



Prepare meals on top of barriers like cutting boards, foil, deli paper, etc.



Remember: If a mistake is made, you must start over and remake the allergy-friendly meal

Proper Cleaning to Remove Allergens



Wash with warm, soapy water



Rinse with clean water



Dry with a fresh cloth



MILK



WHEAT



EGGS



SOY



SHELLFISH



PEANUTS



TREE NUTS



FISH

Top 8 Allergens

But over 170 foods have caused food allergy reactions

www.foodallergy.org

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<https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/avoiding-cross-contact>

FARE Resource

How to Avoid Cross-Contact

English and Spanish

How to Avoid Cross-Contact



What is cross-contact?

Cross-contact happens when one food comes into contact with another food and their proteins mix. As a result, each food then contains small amounts of the other food. These amounts are so small that they usually can't be seen.

Even this tiny amount of food protein has caused reactions in people with food allergies!

The term "cross-contact" is fairly new. Some people may call this "cross-contamination."

Why don't we use the term cross-contamination?

Cross-contamination usually refers to bacteria or viruses that get on food and make it unsafe to eat. In cross-contamination, cooking the food will lower the chance of a person getting sick.

This is not the same with food allergies and cross-contact. Cooking does not remove an allergen from a food!

The only way to stop you from having a reaction is to avoid the food and carefully clean anything that came in contact with it using soap and water.

Examples of cross-contact

| Direct Cross-Contact (allergen was directly applied and then removed) | Indirect Cross-Contact (allergen was not directly applied) |
|---|---|
| Peeling cheese off a cheeseburger to make it a hamburger | Using the same spatula that flipped a cheeseburger to flip a hamburger |
| Removing shrimp from a salad | Not washing hands after handling shrimp before making the next salad |
| Scraping peanut butter off a piece of bread and using it to make a different sandwich | Wiping off—not properly cleaning—a knife used to spread peanut butter before using it to spread jelly |

Tips to avoid cross-contact

- Use utensils, cutting boards and pans that have been thoroughly washed with soap and water. Consider using separate utensils and dishes for making and serving safe foods. Some families choose a different color to identify the safe kitchen tools.
- If you are making several foods, cook the allergy-safe foods first.
- Keep the safe foods covered and away from other foods that may splatter.
- If you make a mistake, you can't just remove an allergen from a meal. Even a small amount of cross-contact makes a food unsafe.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before touching anything else if you have handled a food allergen. Soap and water or commercial wipes will remove a food allergen. Sanitizing gels or water alone will not remove an allergen.
- Scrub down counters and tables with soap and water after making meals.
- Do not share food, drinks or utensils. Teach children not to share these when they are at school or with friends.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces
- Preventing Cross Contamination During Storage and Preparation
- Washing Hands
- Serving Safe Food to Students with Food Allergies

HACCP-Based SOPs

Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces (Sample SOP)

PURPOSE: To prevent foodborne illness by ensuring that all food contact surfaces are properly cleaned and sanitized.

SCOPE: This procedure applies to school nutrition employees involved in cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces.

KEY WORDS: Food Contact Surface, Cleaning, Sanitizing

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Train school nutrition employees on using the procedures in this SOP.
2. Follow state or local health department requirements.
3. Follow manufacturer's instructions regarding the use and maintenance of equipment and use of chemicals for cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces. Refer to Storing and Using Poisonous or Toxic Chemicals SOP.
4. If state or local requirements are based on the FDA Food Code, wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces of sinks, tables, equipment, utensils, thermometers, carts, and equipment:
 - Before each use.
 - Between uses when preparing different types of raw animal foods, such as eggs, fish, meat, and poultry.
 - Between uses when preparing ready-to-eat foods and raw animal foods, such as eggs, fish, meat, and poultry.
 - Any time contamination occurs or is suspected.
5. Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces of sinks, tables, equipment, utensils, thermometers, carts, and equipment using the following procedure:
 - Wash surface with detergent solution.
 - Rinse surface with clean water.
 - Sanitize surface using a sanitizing solution mixed at a concentration specified on the manufacturer's label.
 - Place wet items in a manner to allow air drying.
6. If a 3-compartment sink is used, setup and use the sink in the following manner:
 - In the first compartment, wash with a clean detergent solution at or above 110 °F or at the temperature specified by the detergent manufacturer.
 - In the second compartment, rinse with clean water.
 - In the third compartment, sanitize with a sanitizing solution mixed at a concentration specified on the manufacturer's label or by immersing in hot water at or above 171 °F for 30 seconds. Test the chemical sanitizer concentration by using an appropriate test kit.

ICN Resource

Online Training: Food Allergies in School Nutrition Programs, Part 3: Avoiding Cross-Contact



Food Allergies in School Nutrition Programs – Avoiding Cross-Contact

ID: E-E04XR0

- Duration: 1h - ★★★★★

ABOUT THIS COURSE

CONTENT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This course is part three of a four-part series designed to give you tips and tools for preparing and serving safe food for children with food allergies. Part three discusses how to avoid cross-contact – the accidental spread of allergens – while storing, preparing, and serving meals to students with food allergies.

Intended Audience: School Nutrition Staff/Employees, School Nutrition Managers, and School Nutrition Directors

Hours of Instruction: 1

Key Area: 2

Professional Standards Code(s): 2600

OSSE DEL Core Knowledge Area: -

<https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/153/food-allergies-in-school-nutrition-programs-avoiding-cross-contact>

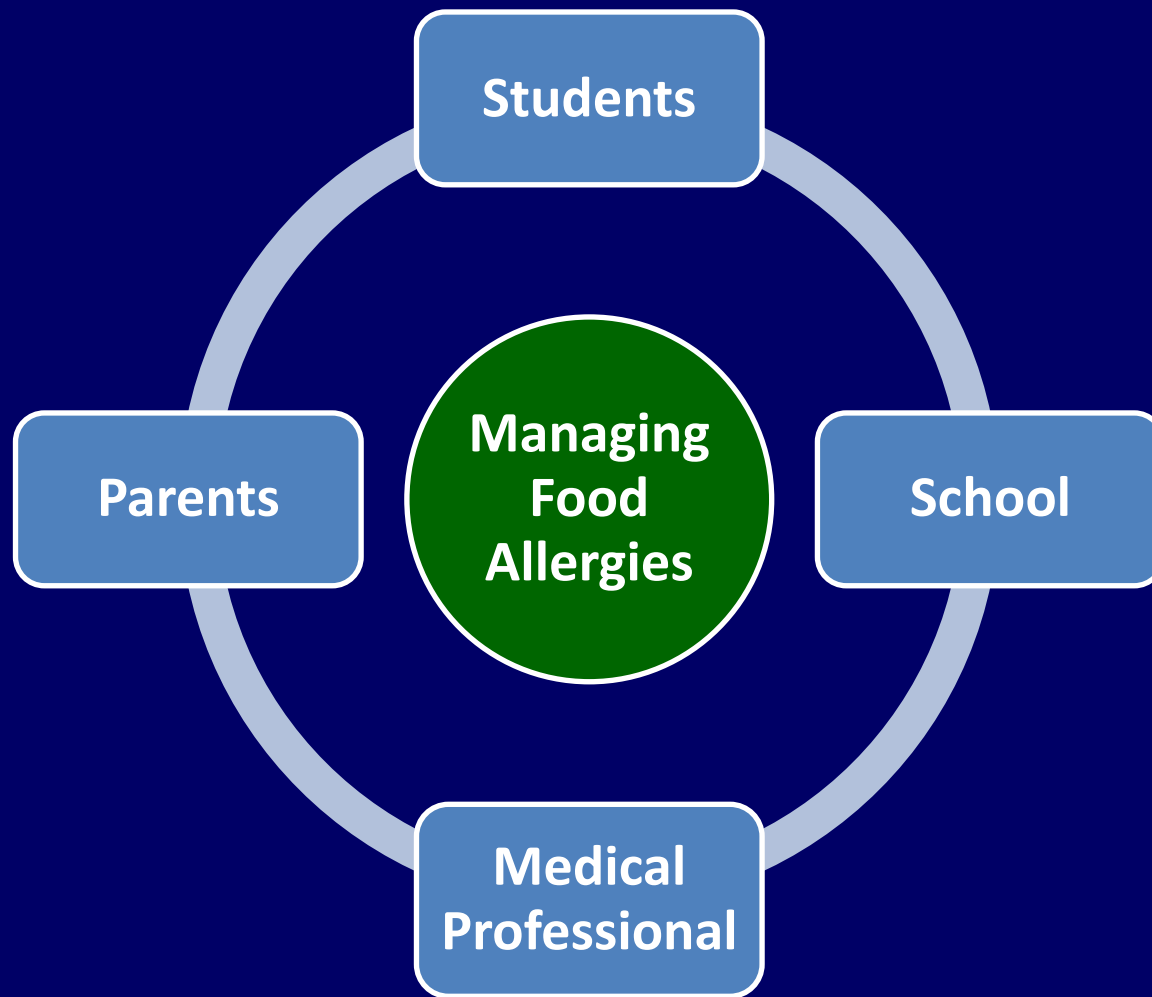
Four Key Actions for School Food Service Staff

4

Promote Communication and Teamwork



Inclusive Team Approach



- School administrators
- School nurse and other medical personnel
- School dietitians
- ***School food service staff***
- Cafeteria aides
- Teachers
- School counselors and other mental health services
- Bus drivers and school transportation staff
- Faculties and maintenance staff
- Coaches
- Other relevant school staff



**Good communication is essential
for providing a safe environment
for students with food allergies**

Strategies for Communication: Student's Diet Plan

- *Understand* what you need to do to follow the student's medical statement
- *Ask questions* if unsure

School nurse



School food service



Strategies for Communication: Student's Diet Plan

- Help communicate information to *all food service staff* involved with managing a student's food allergy

School food
service managers



School food
service staff

School food
service staff



School food
service staff



Strategies for Communication: Nutrition Information

■ *Share information* about ingredients in recipes and foods served by the school food service program

- Students
- Parents
- School nurses
- Others as needed



Strategies for Communication: Nutrition Information

- Provide *advance copies of menus* for parents to use in planning



Summary of Reasonable Modifications

- Based on *medical statement* (or IEP or Section 504 plan, if applicable)
- *Case-by-case basis* (specific to each child)
- Avoid child's food allergens



Summary of Four Key Actions

1. Recognize students with food allergies
2. Read food labels
3. Prevent cross-contact of possible food allergens
4. Promote communication and teamwork




More Resources



ICN Resource

Online Training: Food Allergies in School Nutrition Programs, Part 1: General Food Allergies



Food Allergies in SNPs - General Food Allergies
ID: E-7VR831
- Duration: 1h - ★★★★★

ABOUT THIS COURSE CONTENT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This course is part one of a four-part series designed to give you tips and tools for preparing and serving safe food for children with food allergies. Part one discusses food allergies, food intolerances, and handling a food allergy emergency.

Intended Audience: School Nutrition Managers, School Nutrition Directors, School Nutrition Employees/Staff, Chefs

Hours of Instruction: 1

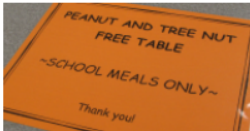
Key Area: 2

Professional Standards Code(s): 2600

<https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/118/food-allergies-in-snps-general-food-allergies>

ICN Resource

Online Training: Food Allergies in School Nutrition Programs, Part 4: Accommodating Food Allergies in Schools



Food Allergies in SNPs – Accommodating Food Allergies in Schools

ID: E-Q07E41

- Duration: 2h - ★★★★★

ABOUT THIS COURSE

CONTENT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This course is part four of a four-part series designed to give school nutrition professionals tips and tools for preparing and serving safe food for children with food allergies. Part four discusses the laws related to food-related disabilities, steps for accommodating students with food allergies, and managing food allergies in outside food sources.

Intended Audience: School Nutrition Staff/Employees, School Nutrition Managers, School Nutrition Directors

Hours of Instruction: 2

Key Area: 2

Professional Standards Code(s): 2600

<https://theicn.docebosaas.com/learn/course/external/view/elearning/162/food-allergies-in-snps-accommodating-food-allergies-in-schools>

ICN Resource

Managing Food Allergies: School Nutrition Staff

FOOD ALLERGY FACT SHEET

Managing Food Allergies: School Nutrition Staff

1. Know your district or school food allergy policy.

- Read your district or school food allergy policy.
- Understand your role in keeping students with food allergies safe.
- Know how to activate the school's emergency action plan if a student has an allergic reaction.

2. Be familiar with each student's medical statement and Food Allergy Action Plan.

- Follow the instructions in the student's medical statement.
- Understand each student's Food Allergy Action Plan/Emergency Care Plan and keep in a place that is easy to find.
- Seek clarification from the parent/guardian if the medical statement is not clear.
- Know your school's system to identify students who have food allergies.
- Keep all student information confidential.

3. Read ingredient labels to check for allergens (foods that can cause allergic reactions).

- Most ingredient labels list the major eight foods causing allergic reactions using their common name (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and crustacean shellfish).
- Check labels for warning statements such as "may contain," "produced on shared equipment," or "produced in a plant that uses." These foods should not be served to students with allergies.
- Check labels for allergens on every product each time the product is purchased. Contact the manufacturer if the label is unclear.
- Maintain labels for a minimum of 24 hours after the food is served.

4. Avoid cross contact when preparing and serving food.

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after each task. Using water alone or hand sanitizer alone does not remove allergens.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all cookware before and after each use when preparing allergen-free foods.
- Clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- Designate an allergy-free zone in the kitchen. When working with multiple food allergies, set up procedures to prevent cross contact.
- Follow standardized recipes exactly as written.
- Use serving utensils and gloves designated for allergen-free foods.
- Clean and sanitize tables and chairs before and after each meal and as needed.



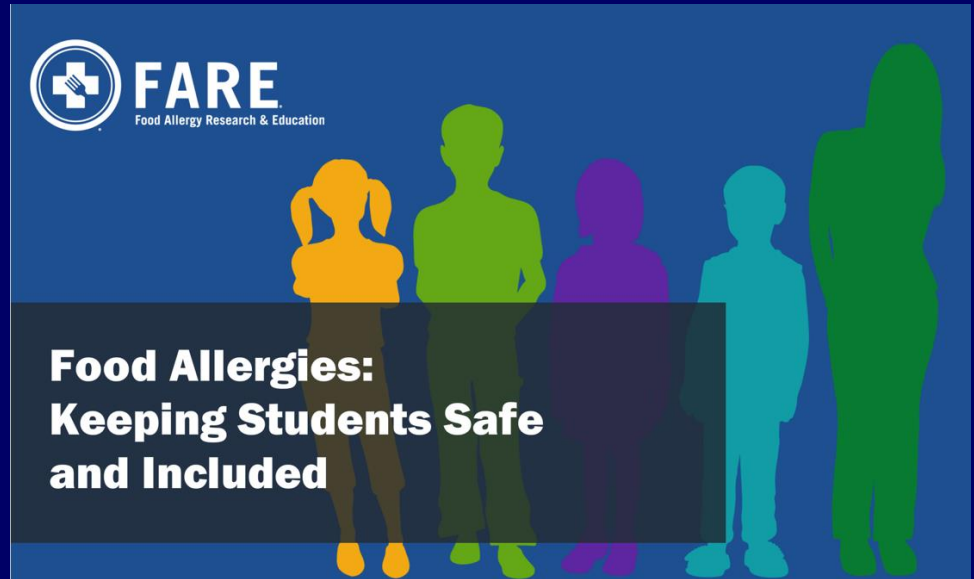
National Food Service Management Institute • The University of Mississippi • 2014



FARE Resource

Food Allergies: Keeping Students Safe and Included

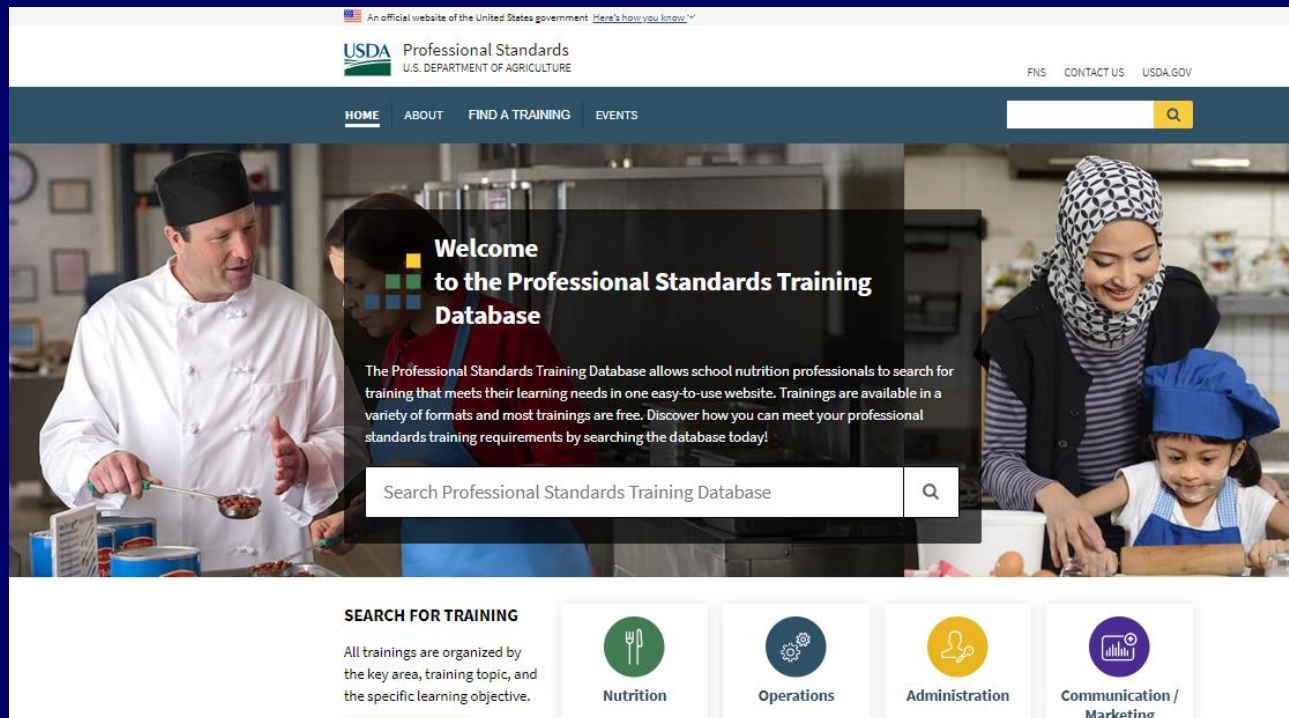
- Online training
- 30 minutes
- Free



<https://www.foodallergy.org/keeping-students-safe-and-included>

FARE Resource

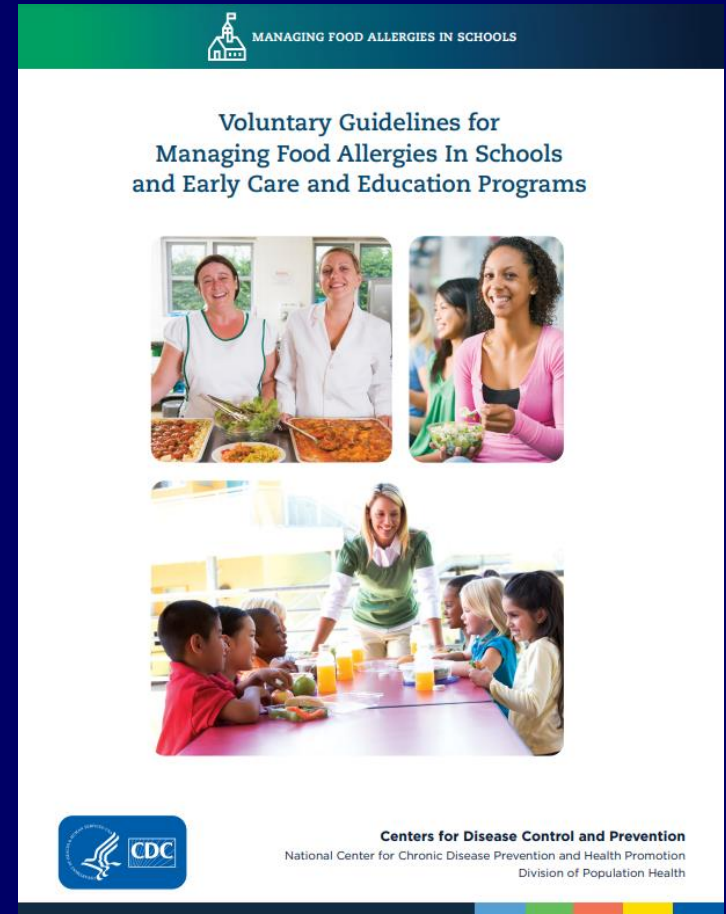
USDA Professional Standards Searchable Database



<https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Resource

Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs



https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/pdf/20_316712-A_FA_guide_508tag.pdf

SNA Food Allergy Resources Website



The screenshot shows the SNA Food Allergy Resources Website. At the top left is the SNA logo, a red apple with a bite taken out of it, and the text "SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION". To the right of the logo are links for "Login to my account", "SHOP", "CAREER", and "CONTACT US". Below these is a search bar with a "Go" button. A green navigation bar contains links for "ABOUT SNA", "MEETINGS & EVENTS", "MEMBERSHIP", "CERTIFICATE & CREDENTIALING", "LEARNING CENTER", "NEWS, RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS", "LEGISLATION & POLICY", "ABOUT SCHOOL MEALS", and "SUPPLY CHAIN/ BACK TO SCHOOL". The main content area is titled "Food Allergy Resource Center". On the left is a "LEARNING CENTER" sidebar with links: "> Breakfast in the Classroom", "> Communications & Marketing", "> Culinary Skills", "> Diversity, Equity and Inclusion", "> Financial Management", "> Training Zone", "> LEAD to Succeed™", and "> Ethics in School Nutrition". The main content area has four featured sections: "Ask the Allergy Expert" (with an image of a doctor), "The BIG 9" (with an image of various foods), "CDC Resources" (with an image of a lunch tray and the CDC logo), and "Food Allergy Training" (with an image of a laptop displaying a training module). On the right is a "RELATED" section titled "Food Allergy Resources" with links: "Food Allergy Resource Center", "Ask the Allergy Expert", "The Big 9", "CDC Resources", "SNA Allergy Training", "Frequently Asked Questions", and "Additional Food Allergy Resources". At the bottom right is a logo for "Food Allergy Resources brought to you by National Peanut Board".

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

Login to my account SHOP CAREER CONTACT US

SEARCH Go

ABOUT SNA MEETINGS & EVENTS MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE & CREDENTIALING LEARNING CENTER NEWS, RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS LEGISLATION & POLICY ABOUT SCHOOL MEALS SUPPLY CHAIN/ BACK TO SCHOOL

LEARNING CENTER

- > Breakfast in the Classroom
- > Communications & Marketing
- > Culinary Skills
- > Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- > Financial Management
- > Training Zone
- > LEAD to Succeed™
- > Ethics in School Nutrition

Food Allergy Resource Center

Ask the Allergy Expert

The BIG 9

CDC Resources

Food Allergy Training

RELATED

Food Allergy Resources

- Food Allergy Resource Center
- Ask the Allergy Expert
- The Big 9
- CDC Resources
- SNA Allergy Training
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Additional Food Allergy Resources

Food Allergy Resources brought to you by

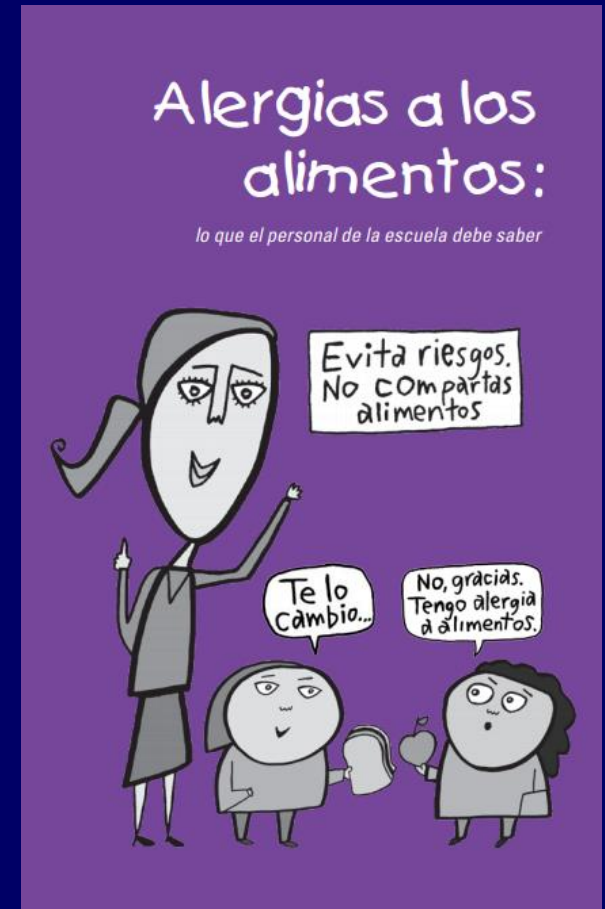
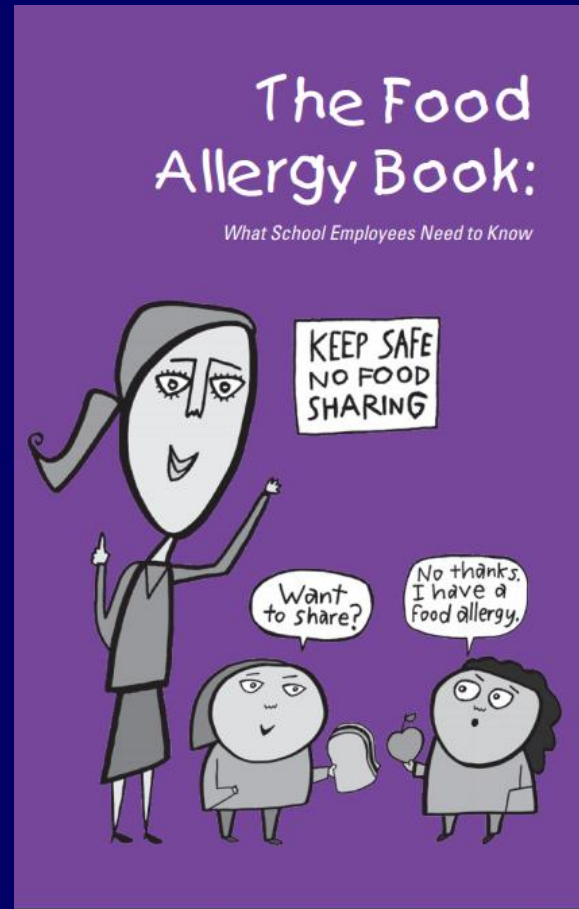
National Peanut Board

<http://schoolnutrition.org/learning-center/food-allergy/>

National Education Association Resource

The Food Allergy Book

English and Spanish



Questions?

Contact the CSDE's school
nutrition programs staff



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Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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