

## **Accommodating Food Disabilities/Special Diets At Your Temple Events and Religious/Nursery Schools**

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Navigating the world if you must follow a “Special Diet” because of a chronic illness or a food allergy is often a daunting task. Some of the chronic illnesses that require a specialized meal plan include diabetes, celiac disease, crohn’s disease and colitis, kidney stones, and high blood pressure. Common food allergies include those for peanuts, eggs, dairy, and shellfish (for an expanded list visit [www.foodicinehealth.org](http://www.foodicinehealth.org)). When an individual with these conditions attends a Temple event or meal, or a child with these conditions attends religious or nursery school, they need to know that the menu being served includes food that they can safely consume in order to maintain their health. Foodicine Health believes that with minimal effort, your Temple can easily assist your members who must follow a prescribed “Special Diet” to eat healthfully and stay on track at Temple onegs, dinners, events, and during religious school snack times.

### **Tips To Follow At Temple Dinners, Events, and Onegs:**

- Some allergic responses to foods, such as nuts and shellfish, can have serious medical consequences, and reactions to ingesting gluten in individuals with celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity can be significant. During the preparation for all events that involve food and drink at your Temple, follow the suggestions below (Community Kitchens) for keeping your Temple “community kitchen” safe for those individuals with food allergies or celiac disease/non-celiac gluten sensitivity.
- On your invitation/sign-up form for your event, include a comment area that asks the member or guest to state whether they have to follow a “Special Diet” and how the Temple can assist the member/guest with their food at that event. On the invitation/sign-up form, include the name and contact information of the Temple member that is in charge of ordering the food for the event so the member with special food requirements can contact that organizer in advance of the event to obtain the help that they may need.

- Let your caterer know that your Temple is inclusive, and that: a) because of medically required dietary restrictions, there may be a need to order a few meals that are different from the menu used for the main congregation; b) you will know more about this need as the registrations for the event are sent in.
- At the event/dinner/oneg, make sure to have cards placed in front of every food item that labels each ingredient in that particular food dish. Remember, salad dressings, condiments, and other prepared food items with multiple ingredients or that are store bought may include gluten nuts, or other foods that some individuals are unable to eat, so keep the jars and containers for those foods available for the member's review.
- If members with celiac disease will be attending the event, include gluten-free breads and/or desserts, if possible. If individuals with diabetes will be attending the event, include a low-carbohydrate or sugar-free dessert on your menu for those members.

### **Tips To Maintaining An Allergen-Free, Gluten-Free Area in Your Temple Community Kitchen**

For individuals with certain food allergies, even minimal contact with the foods they are allergic to can cause a serious reaction. Therefore, at your Temple, food storage, meal preparation, and meal service (plating and serving) require special attention in order to safeguard against cross contamination of the ingredients in the meals for your general congregation with the meals for those with food allergies. To assist with those efforts:

- Any individual that is handling food should wash their hands before and after meal preparation. Optimally, all individuals involved with meal preparation should wear protective gloves.
- All surfaces, dishes, and equipment should be washed with soap and water before use and after use. Use a separate cloth to clean the area used for meal preparation for the general congregation from the cloth used for the meal preparation for those with food allergies or celiac disease. Use a ratio of one tablespoon of bleach to one gallon of water to clean countertops.
- A separate area within the kitchen should be designated for gluten-free and allergen-free food storage and meal preparation. Place parchment/wax paper or foil down onto

your counters before placing food on the counter to prevent cross contact with small particles of gluten or food allergens.

- Do not use the same pots or utensils used for the meal preparation for the general congregation as you use for the preparation of meals for those who must eat gluten-free or those with food allergies. For example, don't put the gluten-free pasta into the same pot of water that you just used to make regular, flour based pasta.
- Label all special foods (for example, gluten free flour or nut-free butters) and store them in air tight, sealed containers away from similar gluten containing foods. Keep these foods in a separate storage area for "special foods". To minimize the potential for particles from gluten or allergen containing foods to fall onto the "special foods", store the foods on a top shelf.

### **Tips To Follow To Accommodate "Special Diets" At Your Temple Religious School or Nursery School**

If children participating in your Temple's religious school or nursery school programs must follow a "Special Diet" because of a chronic illness or a food allergy, there are several steps that the Temple can take to facilitate a positive, healthy, and safe experience at the school. In a private religious school that receives federal funding under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), parents can collaborate with Temple religious school staff to design a 504 plan to accommodate the student's special dietary needs. Here are other recommended steps:

- Include a question on every religious school/nursery school enrollment form asking if the student must follow a "Special Diet", asking for the details of that diet, and requiring a physician's note confirming and documenting the student's medical condition.
- Ensure that all administrators, teachers, interns, and assistants are aware of the students within the Temple program that must follow a "Special Diet", the details of that particular diet, the potential consequences of non-compliance with some of the diets (food allergies, gluten-related food disabilities, diabetes, etc.), and which procedures to follow in the event of a medical response to the ingestion of a particular

food. This includes procedures for contacting emergency medical personnel, maintaining foods to provide to students in the event of a low-sugar diabetes episode, knowing the location of items such as epi-pens for a response to a food allergy, and knowing how to administer an epi-pen treatment.

- Ensure that, especially in classrooms with students that have food allergies or celiac disease/non-celiac gluten sensitivity, students wash their hands before and after meals and snacks, tables are wiped clean before and after meals, and food sharing between students is not permitted.
  
- In classrooms with students that have celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity, again, ensure that food is not shared. For additional resources to maintain safe, healthy classrooms for students that must eat gluten-free, visit [www.beyondceliac.org](http://www.beyondceliac.org) for the gluten-free Back to School Toolkit for assistance with accommodations. Other related gluten free tools are available at [www.gluten.net](http://www.gluten.net) in the “Kids” section.
  
- In classrooms that include students with a peanut allergy, resources, tools, and procedures to maintain a safe, healthy, peanut-free classroom can be found at: a) [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org), the website for FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education), a national advocacy group (go to the “Back to School Headquarters” and “Parents” sections); b) [www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/allergy.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/allergy.pdf) (Resources for Managing Food Allergies in School, Managing Life Threatening Food Allergies in Schools), developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education; c) [www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=135](http://www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=135) Managing Food Allergies in Schools, developed by the National Association of School Nurses; c) the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, and: d) [www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=249](http://www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=249) Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food Allergy Research & Education and the National Association of School Nurses.

