

# Food Allergies & Special Dietary Needs

## Accommodations for Children with Allergies & Special Dietary Needs

A food allergy is caused when the body's immune system mistakes an ingredient in food – usually a protein – as harmful and creates a defense system (special compounds called antibodies) to fight it. An allergic reaction occurs when the antibodies are battling an "invading" food protein. Although a person could have an allergy to almost any food, the following foods account for almost 90 percent of all food-related allergic reactions:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (such as cashews and walnuts)
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Wheat

The Springfield culinary and nutrition service program will work with you to make reasonable accommodations, which adhere to the guidelines set forth by the USDA and the National School Lunch Program. Springfield does not make meal accommodations based on personal preferences

Before accommodations can be made, you must submit a medical statement from your child's doctor to your school nurse. Each special dietary request must be supported by a statement, which explains the food substitution that is requested. A recognized medical authority must sign it. **THIS MUST BE UPDATED YEARLY.**

The medical statement must include:

- An identification of the medical or special dietary condition which restricts the child's diet.
- The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet.
- The food or foods to be substituted.
- USDA Medical Statement to request Special Meals and/or Accommodations Form  
[https://www.homegrowspringfield.org/download\\_file/force/81/223](https://www.homegrowspringfield.org/download_file/force/81/223)

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the alternative foods available for your child's special dietary needs, please contact our resident Registered Dietitian, Erika Grover:

Food Service Department Phone: 413-732-1121

## **Sodexo Food Allergy and Nutrition Information Disclaimer**

Please be advised that our menu items may contain allergens or may have come in contact with items containing allergens. In addition, food manufacturers may change their formulation or manner of processing without our knowledge. Sodexo therefore cannot guarantee the accuracy of nutrition information. Ingredient and nutrition content of foods may vary due to changes in product formulation, recipe substitutions, portion size and other factors. The nutrition analyses provided are approximations only. Sodexo assumes no liability for any adverse reactions that may occur in the school cafeteria. We encourage all food allergic individuals to first inform the school nurse of allergy/intolerance and then work with our staff to plan a menu.