



So you want to know more about...

Sharing Food From Home

For more information, please contact

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Food For Thought

Allergies to a variety of foods—notably nuts and wheat—as well as food preferences, such as vegetarianism, are becoming more common. Some allergies are so severe that even breathing in the aroma of the food (e.g. peanut butter) can be life threatening to allergic children and adults.

Food preferences can also have far-reaching effects in this era of prepared foods. Gelatin, an animal product, is an ingredient in many yogurt brands, and lard

is found in some muffin mixes.

Nutritional concerns also affect the food we serve at the center. Our menus are developed using guidelines from the Children's Nutrition Council. We serve a well-balanced variety of kid-friendly foods. Because of this, we believe that *occasional* birthday treats or other less "healthful" food choices are appropriate in our programs. The "**Birthdays**" **Purple Page** has information about how we celebrate at the center.

Gretchen's House wants to make reasonable efforts to accommodate all special **food needs and preferences**. Because we are a group setting, this policy requires cooperation from *all* parents. The list below details our practices and expectations for families regarding food from home. Our goal is to keep meal preparations practical while respecting individual differences and keeping all children safe. We appreciate your help toward achieving this goal.

"Food From Home" Policy

FOOD PREFERENCES

What Gretchen's House does:

- **If a comparably priced, easily found substitution for a menu item is available, it may be purchased for the entire center.** For example, a center with a vegetarian child may buy only muffin mixes containing vegetable (rather than animal) fat, rather than giving the vegetarian child a different snack.
- **Food preferences will be accommodated on a child-by-child basis if a comparably priced, easily found substitution is not available.** For example, a vegetarian child may be given tomato sauce without meat on spaghetti, or the center may purchase soy hot dogs for vegetarian children when turkey dogs are served.

What you can do:

If you have religious or lifestyle dietary restrictions, please speak with your center director and teachers about what this will mean for your child in our program.

FOOD ALLERGIES

What Gretchen's House does:

- **Allergy accommodations will be made on a child-by-child basis if the condition is not severe or life threatening.** For example, a child with a wheat allergy will be given alternative foods when the menu calls for wheat bread or crackers.
- **Allergy accommodations will be made on a room-by-room basis if the condition is life threatening.** For example, in a classroom which includes a child with a severe nut allergy, no nut products will be served.
- In the case of an allergy so severe that it is dangerous for the child to touch small amounts of the food or breathe in its odor, **staff will take reasonable precautions outside the classroom with the understanding that complete protection is not possible.**
- **Allergies that are a major health problem will be posted on classroom doors.**

FOOD ALLERGIES

What you can do:

- **Only parents of children with food allergies may bring outside food into the center.**
- **Teachers will prepare an appropriate birthday snack with the children in the program.**
- **Groups using the center for parties or meetings may not bring peanut products into the center, and must remove all food and clean up all traces of food when their event is over.**
- **When parents of children with food allergies provide alternative foods such as soy milk, lactose-free cheese, or other substitutions, these must be labeled with the child's name and discard date.**

For more information on food allergies, check out the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network website at www.foodallergy.org



Peanut-Free Lunch Ideas

Because even slight exposure to peanut butter can be dangerous for children who are allergic to it, we have banned all peanut butter from programs with any allergic children. Although PB & J is often a staple for bag lunches, we have plenty of healthful and tasty alternatives to recommend.

Perishable food needs a cold pack. Our SCAMP programs, however, require disposable lunch packs, so we keep the lunches together in an insulated container. Choosing one or more servings of food from each category will provide a nutritionally balanced menu.



Bread: pita, muffins, quick breads (banana, pumpkin, etc.) whole wheat buns, mini bagels, flour tortillas.

Protein: cheese, cream cheese (some kids like it with jelly), hummus, turkey or chicken breast.

Vegetables: baby carrots or carrot sticks, fresh green beans, sugar snap peas, cucumber coins, zucchini sticks, broccoli florets.

Fruits: 1/2 banana, small apple, clementines, raisins or other dried fruit, pineapple chunks, melon balls or cubes.

Allergen-free* Snack Recipes

**these recipes contain wheat, which can also be an allergen*

Pumpkin-Apple Muffins

1 2/3 cups flour
1 cup sugar
1 T plus 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice, divided.
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. baking powder
1 cup canned pumpkin
1/2 cup milk-free, soy-free margarine, softened
3 T water, 3 T corn oil, 2 tsp. baking powder; mixed together
1 apple, peeled and finely chopped
3 T sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line muffin tins with paper liners; set aside. Combine flour, sugar, 1 T spice, baking soda, salt, and baking powder. Make a well in center of mixture. Pour in pumpkin, margarine, water, oil, and baking powder mixture. Stir till well-moistened; fold in apple. Spoon batter into muffin tins, filling 2/3 full. Combine 3 T sugar and remaining spice, sprinkle evenly over muffins. Bake 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from pans immediately and cool on a wire rack.

Peachy Coffeecake

2 1/2 cups flour
1 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. cloves
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
2 tsp. yeast dissolved in 1/2 cup warm water
1/3 cup applesauce
1/2 cup water
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 peach, thinly sliced
1/3 cup brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a Bundt pan, set aside. Combine flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Add cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg; stir again. Blend in yeast mixture, applesauce, water and vanilla extract. Pour 1/3 batter into prepared pan. Spread peaches in thin layer over batter. Sprinkle brown sugar over peaches. Pour remaining batter into pan. Bake 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 15 minutes and remove to wire rack to cool completely.

Kelli's Candy Cookies

3 cups quick oats
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup milk-free, soy-free margarine

Line 2 baking sheets with waxed paper, set aside. Combine oats and cocoa. Set aside. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine sugar, water, and margarine. Boil one minute, remove from heat, and pour over cocoa mixture. Mix well. Drop by rounded teaspoonful onto prepared baking sheets. Allow to harden. Once cookies have cooled, keep in refrigerator.

OR:

Pour mixture into a well-greased 13x9 inch baking pan. Once hardened, cut candy into bars to look more like "traditional" candy bars.

Coconut Puffs

1 3/4 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
2 T milk-free, soy-free margarine, softened.
2 T corn oil

1 1/2 T water, 1 1/2 T oil,
1 tsp. baking powder; mixed together
2 tsp. coconut extract
1/4 cup water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease two cookie sheets. Set aside. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside. Combine sugars, margarine, and oil. Beat until creamy. Add water, oil, and baking powder mixture, coconut extract, and water. Beat until well-blended. Drop by spoonful onto prepared cookie sheets. Bake 9 minutes. Move to wire rack to cool completely.

You can find these recipes and more at the Food Allergy Network website: www.foodallergy.org