



St Brigid's Catholic School

New Norfolk

NUT SAFE SCHOOL POLICY

Question: Why is My Child's School Nut Safe? What food can she/he bring?

Answer:

The rationale for peanut and nut safe classrooms and schools has to do with the somewhat unique nature of these allergies. Most people with food allergies -- even severe allergies -- can manage their allergies by simply not eating foods that have their allergens in them. They read labels, don't eat food if they don't know its origins, and ask questions to stay aware of cross-contamination.

People with peanut and tree nut allergies follow all these steps, but there are two limits to this approach. First, it's possible for people with these two allergies to react to traces of nut dust in the air (from peanut shells, for example). Second, nuts are full of natural oils that leave residues. While these residues can be removed with common household cleaners, it can be difficult or impossible to clean areas in the middle of lunch, for example, or for school cleaning staff to know and to be available to clean oils off of tainted walls or doorknobs etc during the school day.

Because of these issues, and because peanut and tree nut allergies can be life threatening, many schools have responded by becoming peanut/ nut safe. Parents of children with these allergies learn to read food labels to make sure they're safe, but for parents who are new to packing lunches or snacks for a nut safe classroom, the learning curve can be steep.

Here are some rules of thumb for reading labels:

- * Under federal law, peanuts and tree nuts have to be clearly identified in a food label if they're used as an ingredient. Look for the word "peanuts" or a particular type of tree nut -- macadamia nuts, brazil nuts, cashews, almonds, walnuts, pecans, pistachios, chestnuts, beechnuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts (pignoli or pinon), gingko nuts or hickory nuts -- in the list of ingredients, or following the word "Contains."

- * Foods that pose a possibility of manufacturing cross-contamination -- that is, where nuts were processed on one line and then another nut-free food was made on the same line, where it could potentially have been contaminated with nuts. Look for warnings like "may include traces of peanuts" or "manufactured on a shared line with tree nuts." Package notices to the effect of "made in a nut-free facility" indicate safe snacks. Many products, however, include no warnings at all. If you want to pack such a food for your child, call the manufacturer.

- * Be aware that manufacturing formulations and practices sometimes change. Even if you've bought a safe snack before, take a quick look at the label each time you buy it to make sure the ingredients or cross-contamination warnings haven't changed.

So what kinds of foods are good to bring to a nut safe classroom? Here are some ideas. Always check labels on packaged foods.

- * Fresh fruit. Bananas are popular year-round, apples and pears are great, and mandarins are easy to peel and available through the winter, just to name a few.

- * Cheese. Most cheese is nut-free.

- * Vegetables. Baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, and cauliflower are among the vegetables some children will eat raw. Small containers of plain yoghurt, salad dressing, or sour cream may be good dips.

- * Raisins and other dried fruits.

- * Air-popped popcorn
- * Fruit snacks.
- * Chips: potato, tortilla, etc.
- * Lunch meat & sandwich bread.
- * Juice, water, and most other beverages.
- * Some biscuits, snack cakes, and crackers. These are more likely to contain nuts or to pose cross-contamination risks than other items on this list, so either check labels very carefully or consider buying these items from a nut-free manufacturer.

'CHOCOLATE' SPREAD

There are chocolate spread products on the market that are nut-free. It is impossible for staff to distinguish such products from nut-based products eg Nutella. As a part of our NUT-SAFE policy it is therefore an expectation that if any nut-free chocolate spreads are used in student lunches parents must inform the class teacher in writing of its use, naming the product in the letter. Please ensure that you check labels very carefully and do NOT use a product that includes nuts.

WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Anaphylaxis Australia www.allergyfacts.org.au/product.html

Nut Free Food

www.Kidspot.com.au/Kids-Food Free Info On Kids Food & Nutrition. Find Specialist Local Food Stores.#

Nut free food - All about nut free food

www.allergease.com.au/nut-free-food.php

Food For Me Must Be Nut Free 3-10+ years. This is the perfect picture book The first of its kind in Australia. Divided into 3 easy to follow sections. ...

www.allergyfacts.org.au/product.html - Cached - Similar

Nut-Free Party Food recipes - All recipes Australia NZ.

allrecipes.com.au/recipes/searchresults.aspx?...Nut-Free...Food -

Website that aims to offer a variety of creative ideas including nut-free recipes is:

<http://www.school-lunch-ideas.com>

You may find the following article of interest:

http://www.school-lunch-ideas.com/Peanut_Free_School_Lunch_Ideas.html