



FoodMatters

A nutrition newsletter for carers of children under five

ISSUE 16

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Spring 2004



Food Allergies insert included to copy and distribute.

Managing special diets in child care

By Cassandra Hood, Dietitian, Noarlunga Health Services

Special diets in child care can be needed for all sorts of reasons such as food allergies or intolerances, cultural or religious practices or even illness. There are many different types of special diets and some of these prove to be a challenge in the child care setting, particularly when you are also trying to promote healthy eating, positive eating practices and provide an enjoyable eating environment that reflects a child's family values and cultural background. All these aspects of food need to be taken into account when planning meals for children, so it can be a bit of a juggling act!

Care providers manage special diets in many ways and what you do depends on the nature of the special diet in question. The practices to manage a severe food allergy will be quite different from those needed for a short term illness (eg, a 'tummy bug').

To follow are some ideas that your service may be able to use to help you manage special diets.

1. Have a Food and Nutrition Policy

Some services already have a formal policy (e.g., Family Day Care and services involved in the Start Right - Eat Right Award Scheme) and this can give you, other staff and parents very clear guidelines about the types and amounts of foods offered, the eating environment and how

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Welcome

to issue 16 of Food Matters.

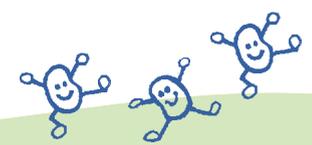
Special diets and how to manage them within your child care service is the focus for this edition. We discuss a range of special diets that children in your care may require, from food allergies to vegetarian to culturally specific diets. We look at what processes you can put in place to ensure your service caters for children with special dietary needs and highlight staff training and support as essential to this process.

Also included in this edition is a cook's first hand experience at managing special diets in child care, as well as a delicious cheesy vegetable and bean slice recipe, suitable for vegetarians but one that all children will love.

Read on to find out about upcoming events and training opportunities as well as some useful resources which provide more detailed information on special diets.

We hope you enjoy this Spring edition of Food Matters.

*Claire Flanagan
Editor and Dietitian (APD)
Women's and Children's Hospital*



the service can cater for special dietary needs. The policy might include:

- the types of food provided by services and by parents
- what information is needed from parents to cater for special dietary needs (eg, a health care plan)
- how a child's dietary needs may affect the type of care that can be given to the child
- information for other parents about catering for special diets (eg, a 'no nuts' service)
- how staff can discuss with parents limits to catering for special diets (eg, where some changes cannot be made because of the physical environment or needs of other children).

2. Talk with parents about their child's diet when they enrol

Try to talk to parents about how to cater for their child's needs when they visit the service before starting. Getting information before the child starts lets you and parents think through any implications for routines or for other children (eg, do groups of children combine at any time during the day for activities). Any changes to the child's routine made before starting in care will help with a smooth move between home and the service.

3. Arrange a meeting between the parent, cook and any other relevant staff

This provides a time to clearly discuss the expectations between parents and the service. A food policy can help to support this process for you. Information to be shared can include:

- parents providing written information from a relevant

health care professional (eg, doctor, dietitian) that outlines any medically related special dietary need; this helps clarify the dietary needs of the child

- a health support plan being written up by the service, including a food allergy and food intolerance record or a Special Diet Record (refer to DECS policy, *Health support planning in schools, preschools and childcare services in Resources section*)
- parents providing information about what food the child can eat and where it can be purchased.

Have these meetings regularly to review the child's menu and make plans for ongoing management. Some special diets may only be short term but others (eg, religious, cultural, allergies) may be long term.

Talking openly with parents about their child's food needs can be a great way to help build trust. Even if it is tricky to find a formal meeting time or to talk when picking up their child, chatting over the phone for a few minutes can often be arranged. This can also give you a chance to find out a bit more about the family's values around food, their priorities and any issues around eating behaviours or healthy food choices.

4. Support your cook and other staff members

In the end cooks are responsible for making the foods for special diets, therefore it is important to support them to ensure that the right foods are offered. Let cooks know about any resources (eg, cookbooks or special products and where they can be found) and any training around special diets. Talking to cooks about the cost of catering for special diets is

also worth-while. With the right training and support, your cook will be able to help your service find the most cost-effective answer to catering for special diets.

Other staff may also be involved in the management of special diets (eg during meal and snack times and if children are involved in food preparation). Make sure staff know about any child's special dietary needs and any health planning in place (especially emergency plans for serious health problems like life threatening food allergies). Keep staff up to date with any changes to the child's diet and routines. Where food is brought from home, staff may need to watch very closely to stop any swapping of foods between children. Resources and training should be given as needed.

By planning, supporting staff and communicating with parents, managing special diets within your service doesn't have to be hard work.



For more information



For enquiries about any aspect of Food Matters, including mailing list details phone (08) 8161 7777. For general information about children's health and nutrition, contact the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service, Health Information Centre, phone (08) 8161 6875.

Claire Flanagan
Editor, Food Matters

A cook's personal insight into managing special diets in child care

Interviewer:

Robyn Wilson, Family Day Care

Interviewee:

Paula Tulloch, Adelaide City Child Care centre

Robyn:

'Hi Paula Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?'

Paula:

'I didn't always live in the city, I was born in Ceduna. I worked as a carer with children in Family Day Care in Waikerie as well as the city. I am diagnosed with coeliac disease myself and therefore am very aware of how important it is to make sure that special dietary needs are followed for children'.

Robyn:

'Paula, how long have you been providing meals for the children here at the Centre?'

Paula:

'I have worked here for approximately twelve months in the kitchen. Before that I worked here as a trained child care worker. I went and did my certificate in Community Food Services as I have always been interested in food and I love working with children. The role of providing the children with nutritious meals is so meaningful and teaching them the importance of choosing the right foods and sometimes assisting and guiding the parents along that path as well'.

Robyn:

'How many children attend the centre?'

Paula:

'About forty children aged from birth to five years'.

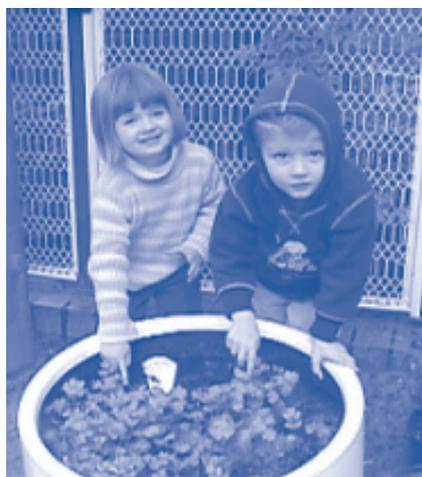
There is an 'ALLERGY LIST' in every room. This is easily visible to make sure nothing is overlooked with each child and their food allergy.

Robyn:

'How are you able to prepare daily meals for children when I would imagine there are children with many likes and dislikes, allergies and other considerations?'

Paula:

'Well, there is one child that is lactose intolerant, one child that is vegetarian, and one that is coeliac (gluten free). There is another child that is unable to eat rice and another that is unable to eat any food containing any traces of egg. Also one of the children due to cultural reasons is unable to eat beef or pork. Therefore, because of all of these factors, I tend to cook all the foods and separate all of the meats into separate containers. I also place a lot of importance about trying to make the food look the same, even though there may not be the same ingredients, I do what is possible to have a similar colour or texture that is presented'.



Robyn:

'What practices do you apply to ensure that these food allergies and special dietary needs are continually monitored?'

Paula:

'The child care centre has a policy stating that no food containing nuts is allowed within the premises. There is an 'ALLERGY LIST' in every room. This is written in red and easily visible to make sure that nothing is overlooked with each child and their food allergy.'

Robyn:

'Are the children involved with the preparation of the meals at all?'

Paula:

'Yes, the children assist with mixing the plain and fruit yoghurts together. Sometimes they might chop the fruit and stir the fried rice. At the centre we grow our own herbs out the back that the children are able to pick'.



Robyn:

'Unfortunately I missed lunch and wasn't able to sample some of the tempting items on the menu but thank you Paula. I admire your devotion to the important role that you play in ensuring children's nutritional requirements are met. Keep up the good work'.



Cooks Connection

Compiled by Sandra Andreassen, Regency Institute of TAFE

Cooking with pulses

Pulses come from a group of vegetables known as legumes which includes peas, beans and lentils. There are 3 main types of pulses: those eaten in the pods which are young and immature, eg snow peas, those that are left to mature and eaten fresh without the pod, eg green peas, and those that are dried, eg split peas, lentils

and beans. Pulses are a good source of vitamins, minerals, fibre and carbohydrate and an excellent source of protein and iron.

Preparation and cooking of dried pulses

Dried pulses need soaking before they can be cooked, with the exception of lentils and split peas which can be added directly to

soups, curries and pasta sauces. Soaking times vary from 4-12 hours, so it is usually more convenient to soak them overnight. For convenience many cooks prefer to use canned reconstituted pulses. These need only to be drained and rinsed before use.



Try the following recipes, which have been modified to include pulses.

Cheesy vegetable and bean slice

Ingredients	Serves 36	Serves 48	Serves 60
Crushed garlic	3 tsp	4 tsp	5 tps
Onions, large (200gms each)	3	4	5
Zucchini (175gms each)	6	8	10
Carrot (200gms each)	6	8	10
Tinned cannellini beans (440gm)	3 tins	4 tins	5 tins
Tasty cheese, grated	360g	480g	600g
Self raising flour	3 cups	4 cups	5 cups
Eggs, medium (55gms)	18	24	30
Canola oil	360mls	480mls	600mls
American mustard	1 ½ tbsp	2 tbsp	2 ½ tbsp
Lamington tray	3	4	5

Method

- Grate vegetables and remove excess moisture.
 - Heat a little of the oil in a large stock pot and sweat vegetables for a few minutes.
 - Remove from heat and cool slightly.
 - Drain and rinse beans, roughly chop or mash coarsely.
 - Beat eggs.
 - Combine all ingredients and pour into greased trays.
 - Bake for 30–40 minutes at 180°C.
 - Leave to stand for 10 minutes before cutting.
 - Cut each tray into 12 serves.
- Serve with cooked vegetables or a salad and wholegrain bread.

Lentil and tomato sauce

Ingredients	Serves 30 (3 Litres)	Serves 45 (4.5 Litres)	Serves 60 (6 Litres)
Red lentils	1 cup	1½ cups	2 cups
Boiling water	300mls	450mls	600mls
Tomato salsa or puree	1.4L	2.1L	3L
Carrot (200gms each)	2	3	4
Mushrooms	200g	300g	400g
Celery (100gms/stick)	2 sticks	3 sticks	4 sticks
Onion (200gms each)	3	4 ½	6
Red capsicum (200gms each)	1	1 ½	2
Oil	2 tsp	3 tsp	4 tsp
Crushed garlic	4 tsp	6 tsp	8 tsp
Tomato chutney	2 tbsp	3 tbsp	4 tbsp
Low salt vegetable stock powder	1 tbsp	1 ½ tbsp	2 tbsp
Dried oregano	1 tsp	3 tsp	4 tsp
Water	1.2L	1.8L	2.4L

Method

- Wash lentils, discard any discoloured ones.
- Place lentils in a large bowl with the boiling water. Leave to soak for 30 minutes.
- Process carrot, mushrooms, celery, onion and capsicum until finely chopped.
- Heat oil in a large stockpot, add garlic and sauté for a few minutes.
- Add all remaining ingredients. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes or until vegetables and lentils are soft and mixture has thickened.
- This mixture can be pureed at this stage if desired.
- Serve with pasta, topped with grated cheese.

This sauce can be used in a variety of ways to enrich many dishes eg lasagne, chilli beans and casseroles.

Navigating the Special diets maze

By Emma Donaghey, Dietitian, Inner Southern Community Health Service

Child care centres are often asked to provide special diets for children in their care. This can be a daunting task! There are many types of special diets and many reasons a child may need one. This article will help you find out about some common special diets.

Food allergy

Food allergy is a response to protein in foods and should be confirmed by a specialist (eg Paediatric Allergist) or a General Practitioner. Common symptoms involve skin (eczema, hives), gut (nausea, diarrhoea), itching or swelling of the lips, tongue, mouth or throat or trouble breathing. Symptoms may occur immediately, but may be delayed up to 48 hours later. Common allergies include egg, cow's milk, peanuts, other nuts, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. Many children grow out of their allergy but nut and seafood allergies are often life-long.

Centres can cater for children with food allergies by not serving the allergenic food (ie, no nuts). Centres can also offer children with a food allergy an alternative to what the other children receive, for example offering children with a cow's milk allergy calcium-fortified soy milk.

Food intolerances

Food intolerances are a response to natural compounds in food and additives. They are not as common in children as food allergies. Food intolerances should be confirmed by a Paediatric Allergist, Immunologist or Dietitian.

Intolerance symptoms may include headaches, fatigue, gut or skin symptoms and can affect mood or behaviour. These may occur up to 48 hours after eating the food. They can also be due to a 'build up' of the same compound from a range of foods over time. These can be hard to manage. Seek help from a dietitian when many foods need to be limited.

Vegetarian diets

Taking animal foods out of a child's diet needs careful planning. Iron, zinc, protein, B12 and calcium intakes may be reduced. When a vegetarian diet includes dairy products, adequate calcium and protein are usually easy to get.

Legumes, nuts, eggs and seeds are good substitutes for meat, chicken and fish. Many centres now ban nuts because of children with nut allergies. Vitamin C, found in tomato, capsicum and citrus fruits, will help the body absorb iron from a vegetarian meal.

Lactose intolerance

Lactose intolerance is when the sugar in milk ('lactose') cannot be digested. Some children have lactose intolerance for only a short time after having gastroenteritis. Calcium-fortified soy milk or lactose-free milk can be given instead.

Cultural

There are a range of special diets for cultural needs such as vegetarian eating, halal and kosher. Ask parents to provide details of their child's diet needs. Consult with your local dietitian if you are unsure of what foods to offer to make sure the child's diet is still balanced.

What's Happening

Compiled by Jane Taylor, Centre for Health Promotion, Women's and Children's Hospital

Anaphylaxis first aid training

The South Australian branch of Red Cross is running Anaphylaxis training throughout 2004 for groups including child care centres, preschools and schools. The training is with an accredited trainer from the Red Cross and focuses on the first aid treatment of anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe, potentially life threatening allergic reaction. The training covers:

- What can trigger an anaphylactic reaction
- Identification of a severe reaction
- How to prevent anaphylactic reactions
- How to manage a reaction in a first aid situation
- When to get medical assistance.

Contact the Red Cross on 1300 367428 for more information. Training sessions cost \$90 per group. Common symptoms of anaphylaxis are:



Difficulty breathing



Pale and Floppy



Hives



Swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat

Resources

Compiled by Jane Taylor, Centre for Health Promotion,
Women's and Children's Hospital

Health support planning in schools preschools and childcare services

Developed by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), this resource outlines policy across all health care related needs in schools, preschools and childcare services. Included in these guidelines are an anaphylaxis care plan pro forma and a modified diet care plan. These are available at www.schools.sa.gov.au/schlpapers - go to > student wellbeing then > health support.

Also available is the booklet *Anaphylaxis - Planning and support guide for schools, preschools and child care services* which provides information on the care and management of anaphylaxis in a range of settings. To order contact the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service Information Centre on (08) 8161 6875. Cost: \$8.80

ASCIA education resources

This web-based service is provided by the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). The website provides 'information bulletins' on a range of allergy related topics including:

- General allergy issues
- Prevention and treatment of allergies
- Food allergy
- Allergy and the skin
- Severe allergies

All information bulletins are available at www.allergy.org.au. Also available is ASCIA's new position paper *ASCIA Guidelines for prevention of food anaphylactic reactions in schools, preschools and childcare centres*.

Friendly Food - Recipes for life

The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Allergy Unit has developed this recipe book. 'Friendly Food' acts as a guide to avoiding allergies, additives and problem chemicals.

Recipes are provided for a range of situations including:

- family meals and outings
- school lunches
- snacks and drinks
- entertaining
- sweet treats
- baking and children's parties.

The recipe book is available from all major bookstores.

Dealing with food allergy

This book and video set contains a 20 minute video which shows the impact that food allergies can have on the lives of children and their families. In the video, experts explain what allergies are, discuss preventative measures and demonstrate the emergency treatment of life threatening allergy reactions (anaphylaxis). The book supports what is discussed in the video.

The set is available for a cost from a range of sources, including the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service, Health Information Centre on (08) 8161 6875.

Mind Over Media fact sheets

A series of fact sheets called 'Mind Over Media' have been developed by Young Media Australia to show how to use the media to make a positive impact in a child's life.

To order this series of fact sheets and find out about others contact the Young Media Australia Helpline on 1800 700 357 or www.youngmedia.org.au.

The SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership aims to promote good nutrition for all South Australian children in early childhood services.

Partners include representatives from Child Care Associations, Department of Education and Children's Services, TAFE, Gowrie Training Centre, SA Dental Service, child care centre cooks, Children, Youth and Women's Health Service, The Cancer Council South Australia, Noarlunga and Inner Southern Community Health Services and Department of Health.

Editorial Policy

Food Matters aims to promote good nutrition in early childhood by providing nutrition information, advice and support to carers of young children and showcasing child care food and nutrition initiatives. While every effort is made to include articles which meet these objectives, inclusion does not necessarily imply endorsement by the SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership. This newsletter may be copied for educational and non-profit purposes with acknowledgement.

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