



A note about dietary restrictions, allergies and food intolerances

Safety tips for teachers

Dietary restrictions

As teachers, it is important to be aware that some children may have religious dietary restrictions, food allergies or may follow special diets. It is very important to be aware of any special requirements before you plan lessons so that you can choose suitable recipes and make any changes as needed.

Halal diet

Halal is the Arabic term for foods that are allowed under Islamic law. Muslims following the Halal diet may only eat meat that's been slaughtered and prepared in accordance with Halal practices.

- ★ All pork products are totally forbidden
- ★ Carnivorous animals cannot be eaten
- ★ Fish can be eaten as long as it has fins and scales
- ★ Other things to avoid include lard, gelatine and whey
- ★ No alcohol (in any form) can be consumed – this includes some vinegars and vanilla extract, so be sure to check the alcohol content

Unless otherwise labelled, we have to assume that standard Halal products fail to meet Jamie's food welfare standards, and therefore we cannot recommend its use in lessons. There are, however, free-range Halal foods available that teachers should look for and make relevant students aware of.

Adapting to suit Halal needs

If this issue is relevant at your school, we recommend creating a policy regarding the use of higher-welfare Halal meat for the children that might require it. Make sure that you buy it from a certified Halal supplier and keep it separate from non-Halal meat. If a policy cannot be agreed that satisfies parents, try an alternative recipe. We have provided additional fish or vegetarian recipes that can be used alongside the chicken recipes, and the suggested adjustments are noted in the lesson plans provided.

For non-meat related concerns, some quick substitutions can be made. Substitute vanilla pods for vanilla essence by slicing the pod lengthways and using a teaspoon to scrape out the seeds. Dressings made with wine vinegars can be swapped for dressings made with lemon juice, or you can look for alcohol-free vinegars.

Kosher diet

Kosher refers to foods that are allowed under Jewish law. Ask what restrictions, if any, your Jewish students have, because it can vary. In general, if someone follows a Kosher diet, the following guidelines apply:

- ★ No pork
- ★ No shellfish, although fish can be eaten as long as it has fins and scales
- ★ Meat and dairy cannot be served at the same time
- ★ All meat must be prepared by a qualified Kosher butcher

Adapting to suit Kosher needs

As with Halal, if this is an issue at your school we recommend creating a policy regarding the use of Kosher meat and equipment, as well as tailoring the lessons accordingly.

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Vegetarian diet

There are several different types of vegetarians, so make sure that you are aware of exactly what a child can and can't eat before the lesson. It is fine to swap some ingredients in the recipes so that those who don't eat meat or animal products can still enjoy the lesson – you just need to plan ahead for substitutions. It is important to note that many Hindus are vegetarian, though the cow in particular is sacred to them, therefore it is possible that the child will eat meat other than beef. Many Sikhs are also vegetarian.

- ★ **Lacto-ovo vegetarians** eat dairy food and eggs in addition to plant foods. They don't eat meat, poultry or fish
- ★ **Ovo-vegetarians** eat only eggs and plant foods. They don't eat dairy foods, meat, poultry or fish
- ★ **Lacto-vegetarians** eat dairy foods and plant foods. They don't eat eggs, meat, poultry or fish
- ★ **Vegans or strict vegetarians** eat only plant foods and products. They don't eat animal foods, eggs or dairy products
- ★ **Pescatarians** are similar to vegetarians, but eat fish and shellfish in addition to an otherwise vegetarian diet

Adapting to suit vegetarian needs

As the Kitchen Garden Project is all about getting children to fall in love with seasonal fruit and vegetables, the majority of the recipes in the project are suitable for vegetarians. We recommend looking through all of the recipes included on the Fruit and Vegetable cards to choose an additional option or recipe for those lessons focused on cooking fish or chicken. Also, please note that lots of Jamie's recipes use Parmesan (Parmigiano Reggiano) cheese, however it contains rennet and therefore is not suitable for vegans or vegetarians. You could try an alternative vegetarian hard cheese, that contains a rennet substitute.

Tips from the nutritionist

It is especially important for a child following a vegetarian diet to get all the nutrients they need for healthy growth. Common deficiencies amongst vegetarians are protein, vitamin B12, vitamin D, and iron. Here are some tips for how to ensure that children are getting what they need:

- ★ Nuts, pulses, eggs and products made from pulses e.g. tofu, are all great sources of protein for vegetarians
- ★ Vitamin B12 can be found in fortified breakfast cereal, eggs, dairy products and yeast extracts, e.g. Marmite
- ★ The body can get vitamin D through direct exposure to sunlight, as well as from sources, such as eggs, and fortified products, such as breakfast cereals. Vitamin D is especially important for young children, so vegetarian children may need to get advice from a doctor as to whether or not they should be taking supplements
- ★ Dark-green leafy veg, pulses, wholemeal bread and flour, fortified breakfast cereals, soya products, nuts and dried fruit (dates and apricots in particular) are sources of iron and should be included in a vegetarian diet

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Gluten-free diet (Coeliac disease)

Gluten is a protein composite found in wheat, rye and barley. Coeliac disease is the inability to tolerate gluten. If a pupil is on a gluten-free diet the following should be avoided:

- ★ Anything that contains wheat, barley, rye, spelt, semolina, couscous or kamut – this includes most breads, pasta, pizza dough and other variations. Oats don't actually contain gluten, but they can be contaminated and not everyone with coeliac disease can eat them
- ★ Gluten can be hidden in less obvious food too, including commercial salad dressings, instant coffee, malted milk, stock, soup, malt vinegar, curry powders, dry seasonings, gravy mixes, oil that was previously used for frying breaded foods, liquorice, soy sauce, flavourings, processed foods, self-basting turkeys and cold meats
- ★ It is also used as a binder in some pharmaceutical products and can be found as an unidentified food starch, modified food starch, caramel colouring and vegetable protein

Adapting to suit gluten-free needs

As following a gluten-free diet has become more common, finding gluten-free flours and pastas has become much easier. Visit the 'free from' section of your local supermarket to find alternative ingredients to use.

Food allergies

Food allergies are common, but not as widespread as people think. The difference between a food allergy and a food intolerance is often misunderstood, but when dealing with lots of different ingredients and people, it's very important to understand the difference.

What is a food allergy

A food allergy is a rapid and potentially serious response to a food by the body's immune system.

If you have a food allergy, your immune system mistakes a particular food for an "invader" and attacks it. This causes an almost immediate reaction, with side effects ranging from a rash, itching and inflammation, to wheezing and difficulty breathing. In really serious cases, it can even cause death.

Common food allergies are to peanuts, tree nuts (including pecans, pistachios, cashews, walnuts, hazelnuts and Brazil nuts), fish and shellfish, and eggs. Roughly half of those with a food allergy are children.

Someone with a serious allergy doesn't even have to eat the problem food to feel the effects of their allergy – just being in a room where the food is being cooked or eating an ingredient that has been in contact with the allergen can cause serious problems, such as anaphylactic shock.

It's important to make sure the people with food allergies carry an epinephrine or "epi" pen with them, even in lessons that don't use specific allergens. It is also important that the parents are aware when cooking lessons are happening and have the option to opt out. If you are unsure of any recipe, speak to the parents or ask the parents to consult their GP.

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Things to note about food allergies

- ★ Acute, distinctive symptoms occur within just a few seconds or minutes of coming into contact with the food
- ★ In extreme cases, it can be life threatening
- ★ It doesn't depend on how much has been eaten – even the smallest amount can cause a reaction

Allergens recognised by the Food Standards Agency:

- ★ Cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt and kamut)
- ★ Crustacean
- ★ Eggs
- ★ Fish (except fish gelatine)
- ★ Peanuts
- ★ Soybeans (except soybean oil and fat)
- ★ Milk (including lactose, except whey and lactitol)
- ★ Nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachio nuts, macadamia nuts and Queensland nuts)
- ★ Celery
- ★ Mustard
- ★ Sesame seeds
- ★ Sulphur dioxide and sulphites (when more than 10mg/kg)
- ★ Lupin
- ★ Molluscs

All of these allergens will be noted where appropriate on the recipe sheets using the following symbol:



PLEASE NOTE: children may have allergies that extend beyond this list, and in these cases teachers and parents should review all recipes before the lessons begin.

What is a food intolerance?

Food intolerance is an adverse reaction to some sort of food or ingredient. It occurs every time the food is eaten, but particularly if larger quantities are consumed. The immune system doesn't cause the problem, it's usually the digestive system. The symptoms tend to occur more slowly, often many hours after eating the problem food. It can include bloating, abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhea, headaches and feeling faint.

Food intolerances are much more common than food allergies, and it's also possible to be intolerant to several different foods. This can make it difficult to identify which foods are causing the problem. Lactose intolerance and coeliac disease are types of food intolerance.

Things to note about food intolerances

- ★ Delayed reactions occur generally with long-lasting symptoms, mainly involving the digestive system
- ★ It's rarely life threatening
- ★ It usually depends on the amount eaten – a reasonably-sized portion is usually needed to cause a reaction, but some people are sensitive to small amounts
- ★ The problem food might be something that is craved
- ★ It's difficult to diagnose because there are only a few reliable tests available

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Diabetes

Unlike allergies and intolerances, diabetes is not a black and white condition, and dietary restrictions vary among cases depending on how much insulin the pancreas produces (i.e. how insulin dependent a person is), the treatment being followed and the dose of treatment given. Diet will also have a big impact on your dose.

Teachers should speak to parents of diabetic children before beginning the Kitchen Garden Project to work together to create a plan for the child's participation in the project. We appreciate how important it is for diabetics to know the nutritional value of what they're eating and the carbohydrate content of their meals, which is why we are publishing the nutrition information for all of our recipes. This way, parents can make an informed choice on which recipes their child can eat, based on their knowledge of their own child's diabetic sensitivity and insulin dose.

Tips from the nutritionist

We get lots of questions sent in asking about recipes suitable for diabetics, and how families and individuals can cater for diabetes, so we have put together a few tips for you to follow. These tips should help you to make sensible food choices and encourage eating habits that will control blood sugar levels and protect long-term health in diabetics.

One of the first treatments advised for diabetes is related to lifestyle adjustments: regular exercise, eating healthily and potential weight loss – these are all easily achievable, if you are given the right help and information.

Being nutritionists, we know how it feels to scrutinise food labels for things such as, added sugar, salt and fat, but unfortunately this is something you will need to be really diligent about. Added sugar tends to sneak in to quite a few processed and ready-made food, and low-fat foods are also known for this. The best thing to do is try and cook your food from scratch, with fresh ingredients – this way you know exactly what you're eating, which will make carb counting and insulin dose adjustments much easier.

Switching to whole grain cereals over refined cereals wherever possible is a great habit to get in to, and swapping to wholemeal versions of foods such as, pasta, rice, bread and flour will slow down the release of energy (carbohydrates) into the blood stream – this will help to avoid steep increases in blood sugar levels. Bulking out meals with plenty of veg, pulses and beans will slow down digestion and the carbohydrate release into the blood stream (this is because they are high in soluble fibre) which will further help stabilise blood glucose levels.

For more information on the nutritional content of the recipes please contact:
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