

## **Frequently Asked Questions: Special Dietary Needs & Allergies at Cuyamaca Outdoor School**

### **1. How can I prepare my child for a successful week at camp?**

We eat regular “family style” meals with ample helpings of food. Students practice good table manners, passing serving dishes, and using utensils to serve food. Encourage your child to try new or unfamiliar foods while at camp. Dining is part of the camp experience and a chance to practice our ICARE philosophy.

Please **do not** send extra food (see question #4). If you have a picky eater, please review the menu with your child and develop a plan based on what your child *will* eat, not what they won’t. Contact the Child Nutrition Supervisor for the current menu and help with a meal plan.

### **2. My child has a special dietary need or allergy, what do I need to do?**

A pink Student Registration & Health Form must be completed for each attending student. Please indicate specific conditions, allergies, and dietary preferences (e.g. vegetarian, no pork, diabetes) on that form. If your child has a medically-certified disability which requires special meal accommodations, the State requires that a Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations (see our website or Camp Coordinator) that includes the most current diet orders be completed and signed by a licensed physician.

Disabilities as defined by the “Americans with Disabilities Act” include metabolic diseases, food anaphylaxis, mental retardation, emotional illness, autism, speech, language and/or visual impairments, etc. We make every effort to accommodate medically-necessary dietary needs. Please contact the Child Nutrition Supervisor prior to your child’s encampment to arrange necessary meal accommodations.

### **3. How is cross-contamination handled in the kitchen?**

**We are a peanut and tree nut-free campus.** We do not prepare or serve peanuts or tree nuts, including coconut. Our kitchen has dedicated space for the preparation of special meals to prevent cross-contamination. We use the Allergen “Saf-T-Zone” System (dedicated cutting board, knives, tongs, spatulas, and thermometer) for the preparation of special meals. The kitchen staff has extensive training on avoiding cross-contamination and SOP manuals and materials from the Food & Allergy Anaphylaxis Network on hand for reference.

### **4. Can I send food to camp for my child who has special dietary needs?**

Our policy is that **NO** food may be sent to camp. This is for multiple reasons: cross-contamination hazards, allergies, the presence of wildlife, and State and Federal regulations dictating that all food served be supplied by commercial sources. Students with special diets (e.g. gluten-free, vegetarian) receive instructions prior to their first meal from the Child Nutrition Supervisor, on how to receive their special meals for the week.

### **5. What substitutions and brands are available for students with Celiac disease?**

We do not make gluten free accommodations for dietary preferences, only for a medically diagnosed condition, in compliance with Child Nutrition guidelines. A Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations must be provided to camp for us to make gluten-free food substitutions. A gluten-free menu is made available for students with Celiac disease. Items our kitchen uses include; Udi’s bread, Ener-G, Glutino snacks, Enjoy Life cookies, and Schar pasta. We also make gluten-free rice flour pancakes from scratch.

### **6. What dairy substitutions are available?**

We offer soy milk and Daiya dairy-free cheese as dairy substitutes. With notice, we *may* be able to provide rice milk. No nut milks are allowed due to our nut-free campus environment.

### **7. Do you have vegetarian options?**

Vegetarian options are available at every meal and are indicated on the weekly menu.

Thank you, Kim McAlexander, Child Nutrition Supervisor

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