

# Standards of care

## Outside food in schools

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Food that is served in schools is typically provided by the nutrition services staff for each district or school; however, there may be times when food is provided that is not prepared by nutrition services staff.

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### Management

Food provided by the school for meals, including breakfast and lunch, should have nutritional information available for families. This should include carbohydrate counts (essential for students with diabetes) as well as an ingredient list (which is vital for students with food allergies).

Treats given to students for special occasions should be brought in a store-bought sealed package and labeled with nutritional information. Homemade treats should not be allowed to protect those students with food allergies, since ingredients may include a life-threatening allergen. This will also protect students with diabetes, who must have access to nutritional information, including the carbohydrate count, which is necessary for proper insulin administration. Parents may still provide homemade or home-baked foods for their child's snack or lunch. However, those items may not be shared with other students.

There is also a risk for a foodborne illness if the food is not prepared according to FDA regulations. All food served must come from an approved food source. Proper food preparation, safe handling practices, holding criteria, and serving guidelines must also be met when serving food to students. Food should be unopened and in a sealed package prior to use.

- There can be a risk of cross-contamination. Even if parents write down the ingredients, there is no way to be assured that there is no cross contamination.
- Food and beverages should not be used as a reward or discipline for academic performance or behavior.

## Food allergies

Students with life-threatening food allergies have the right to expect the food provided to them, either by the school for regular meals or treats brought in for special occasions, to be safe for them to eat. For this reason, all food brought into the school to be shared with students should be in a store-bought sealed package labeled with nutritional information, including all ingredients.

## Diabetes

To maintain good control of blood glucose, students with diabetes must dose with insulin for all carbohydrates eaten. They may also require a dosage correction as determined by their healthcare plan. For this reason, all food brought into the school to be shared with students should be in a store-bought sealed package labeled with nutritional information, including carbohydrate count.

## Snacks in school

Schools are encouraged to celebrate with fun rather than food. Principals, school staff, parents or guardians, and students should promote healthy classroom and school celebrations by minimizing the use of candy and snacks in school.