Accommodating Special Dietary Needs
Summary Chart

Scenario	Determination of Disability	Examples of Medical Conditions [1]	Modification Required?	Required Documentation?[2]	Who Must Sign Medical Statement?	What Medical Statement Must Include
Child has a disability that restricts their diet under Section 504	Section 504 meeting	Medical conditions that substantially limit a major life activity and affect the child's diet, for example • Metabolic diseases, such as diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU) • Food anaphylaxis (severe food allergy)	Yes	Medical Statement for Children with Disabilities (CDE form SD1)	Licensed Physician (MD or DO), advanced practice nurse (APN) with prescriptive authority (RXN) or physician assistant (PA)	• The child's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet • The major life activity affected by the disability • The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted
Child has a disability that restricts their diet under IDEA	Planning and placement team meeting	Medical conditions that meet the IDEA recognized disability categories require related services under IDEA and affect the child's diet, for example • Traumatic brain injury • Other health impairment, e.g., heart condition, diabetes	Yes	Medical Statement for Children with Disabilities (CDE form SD1)	Licensed Physician (MD or DO), advanced practice nurse (APN) with prescriptive authority (RXN) or physician assistant (PA)	• The child's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet • The major life activity affected by the disability • The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted

Scenario	Determination of Disability	Examples of Medical Conditions [1]	Modification Required?	Required Documentation?[2]	Who Must Sign Medical Statement?	What Medical Statement Must Include
Child has a disability that restricts their diet according to a licensed physician but not through Section 504 or IDEA	Licensed Physician (MD or DO), advanced practice nurse (APN) with prescriptive authority (RXN) or physician assistant (PA)	Medical conditions that do not qualify for a disability under Section 504 or IDEA but that are determined by the child's physician, advanced practice nurse or physician assistant to be severe enough to be considered a disability, for example • Food anaphylaxis (severe food allergy)	Yes	Medical Statement for Children with Disabilities (CDE form SD1)	Licensed Physician (MD or DO), advanced practice nurse (APN) with prescriptive authority (RXN) or physician assistant (PA)	• The child's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet • The major life activity affected by the disability • The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted
Child does not have a disability under Section 504, IDEA or according to a licensed physician, but has a medical condition that restricts their diet	Recognized medical authority, including physicians, physician assistants, or advanced practice nurses	• Food allergy (not life threatening) • Food intolerances (except lactose intolerance)[3] • Overweight (not morbidly obese) • High blood cholesterol	No[4]	Medical Statement for Children without Disabilities* **required if school chooses to make accommodations* (CDE form SD2)	Recognized medical authority	• An identification of the medical or other special dietary need that restricts the child's diet • The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods that may be substituted
Personal Food Preferences	Not applicable	Not applicable	No[5]	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Vegetarianism	Not applicable	Not applicable	No[5]	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Religion	Not applicable	Not applicable	No[6]	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

[1]These examples of medical conditions are not all-inclusive and may not require accommodations for all children. Some medical conditions may apply to more than one scenario.

[2] The Colorado Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition medical statements are available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutriSpecDietaryNeeds

[3] Schools can choose to provide low-fat (1%) or fat-free lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk without a medical statement. Schools can also choose to provide one or more nondairy milk substitutes (such as soy milk) that meet the USDA nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Nondairy milk substitutes require a written request from parents/guardians but they do not require a medical statement. The written request must indicate the medical or other special dietary need that restricts the child's diet. For more information, see http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/nutriSpecDietaryNeeds

[4] USDA regulations do not require schools to make modifications for student without disabilities. However, schools can choose to make these accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

[5] USDA regulations do not require schools to make modifications to meals based on food choices or the personal preferences of a family or child. However, schools may choose to accommodate these preferences by offering multiple meal choices and implementing offer versus serve (OVS).

[6] USDA grants meal pattern exemptions based on religion only for entities (schools, institutions and sponsors), not individuals. However, schools may choose to address individual needs by substituting different food items within the same component category of the USDA meal patterns, offering multiple meal choices and implementing OVS.