## Accommodating Special Dietary Needs

### Scenario Summary Chart

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<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Determination of Disability</th>
<th>Examples of Medical Conditions ¹</th>
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| Child has a disability that restricts their diet under Section 504       | Section 504 meeting                              | Medical conditions that substantially limit a major life activity ³ and affect the child’s diet. Examples include:  
  - Metabolic diseases, such as diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU)  
  - Food anaphylaxis (severe food allergy) | Yes                                                    | Medical Statement for Meal Modification OR  
  If medical statement requirements are written into 504 plan, no medical statement is required |
| Child has a disability that restricts their diet under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (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. Examples include:  
  - Traumatic brain injury  
  - Other health impairment, i.e. heart condition, diabetes | Yes                                                    | Medical Statement for Meal Modification OR  
  If medical statement requirements are written into IEP, no medical statement is required |
| Child has a disability that restricts their diet according to a licensed physician but not through Section 504 or IDEA | Recognized medical authority, including physicians, physician assistants, or advanced practice nurses with prescriptive authority | Medical conditions that do not qualify for a disability under Section 504 or IDEA but are determined by the child’s physician, advanced practice nurse or physician assistant to be severe enough to be considered a disability | Yes                                                    | Medical Statement for Meal Modification |

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| Child does not have a disability under Section 504, IDEA but has a medical condition that restricts their diet | Recognized medical authority, including physicians, physician assistants, or advanced practice nurses with prescriptive authority | Examples include:  
- Food allergy (not life threatening)  
- Food intolerances (including lactose intolerance)  
- Overweight (not morbidly obese)  
- High blood cholesterol | Yes | Medical Statement for Meal Modification OR If meal falls within meal pattern, parent has option to fill out Dietary Preference Form |
| Personal Food Preferences                                              | Not applicable              | Not applicable                | No                     | Dietary Preference Form for Meal Modification, if district chooses to accommodate       |
| Vegetarianism                                                         | Not applicable              | Not applicable                | No                     | Dietary Preference Form for Meal Modification, if district chooses to accommodate       |
| Religion                                                              | Not applicable              | Not applicable                | No                     | Dietary Preference Form for Meal Modification, if district chooses to accommodate       |

1 These examples are not all inclusive. Some medical conditions may apply to more than one scenario.

2 The Colorado Department of Education Office of School Nutrition medical statements are available on the [Special Dietary Needs webpage](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cde/special-dietary-needs).

3 Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), anything that substantially limits a major life activity constitutes a disability. The “categories of diseases and conditions” in the ADA are not all inclusive, meaning there are more conditions that meet the definition of a disability than are listed.

4 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 USDA nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, visit the [Special Dietary Needs webpage](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cde/special-dietary-needs).

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). It is recommended parents fill out a Dietary Preference Form for Meal Modification should schools choose to accommodate these preferences.

6 USDA grants meal pattern exemptions based on religion only for entities (schools, institutions and sponsors), not individuals. 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.

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