

Food and Allergy Policy for Kerem Shalom

Food has always played a central role in Judaism; we use food for communal sharing and celebration. While we want to continue this tradition, for an increasing population, this communal sharing has become both life threatening and a road block to participating in our community.

In accordance with this principle of Judaism, *Kol Yisrael arevim ze baze* – we are all responsible for each other – we are adopting a food and allergy policy.

This policy has three goals:

- To minimize contact with allergens
- To provide a welcoming environment for people with a special food related needs
- To encourage our community to honor our commitment to our bodies, *sh'mirat ha guf* – guarding the body as a gift from God.

To that end, we are implementing the following practices:

- No peanuts or tree nuts shall be brought into Kerem Shalom's kitchen, common spaces or classrooms by any individual or group using Kerem Shalom's space.
- When food is brought in for Kerem Shalom events, the person who brought the food will use a form to circle food allergens and list ingredients if possible, or will keep the ingredient labels from prepared foods available.
- Volunteers who bring food in for Kerem Shalom communal events will strive to supply healthy foods.
- Volunteers purchasing food for events will strive to find some alternatives that are free of the major allergens. Some easy alternatives:
 - Oreos, Vienna Fingers, Bachman Pretzels and graham crackers have no dairy, egg or nuts
 - Fruit and vegetables are healthy alternatives with no dairy, egg, nut or gluten

(1) Allergies:

There are 8 major allergens and there are known members of Kerem Shalom and the staff who are allergic to them. They are *dairy, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, soy, wheat, and gluten*. The allergies range in severity to hives and stomach aches to a life threatening reaction, anaphylaxis, which requires immediate medical intervention. *Peanut and tree nut allergies in particular are extremely dangerous, because for some, any level of exposure can cause an anaphylactic reaction, shutting off the ability to breathe.*

(2) Safety and Responsibility

While we recognize that no space can be 100% safe for those with life threatening allergies, and we make no guarantees or representations to those individuals, we feel it is our responsibility to minimize the risk they encounter when they are at Kerem Shalom. People with allergies need to remain vigilant about allergens and take responsibility for verifying ingredients before eating.

February 2009

Compiled by Judy Rosenbaum, Pat Lukens, Jan Huber O'Callaghan and Rosa Hallowell

(3) Food Labeling

The ingredient list below will be part of the invitations to family Shabbat dinners and other related events, and will be available in the kitchen for all food brought in. The ingredient list will be inserted in a small frame and put next to the food. Events that are not open to the Kerem Shalom community (such as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah party) do not require labeling, although the nut ban is in effect for all food brought into the kitchen, common areas and classrooms.

(4) Healthy Choices

Jewish food does not have to be unhealthy food. Many of our community members struggle with complex health issues and providing healthy foods from which to choose at any communal event makes these members feel more welcome, benefits us all and is a gift to the next generation.

(5) Implementation

If someone brings in food that contains nuts or peanuts, it cannot be served. The item can be removed to the table in the admin wing where it can be picked up after the event. In addition, if students arrive with a snack containing nuts, they will be asked to finish it in the admin wing and staff will supervise clean-up and hand washing.

People with nut allergies should be aware that the admin wing may contain food with nuts. If an item with nuts is left in the refrigerator, it will be removed.

<p>This dish contains (please circle):</p> <p><i>egg soy fish wheat dairy gluten</i></p> <p>Food item: _____</p> <p>Brought by: _____</p> <p>Ingredient list: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>*Remember that nuts and nut products may not be served.</p>
--

The following common nuts are considered tree nuts under U.S. law: almond; Brazil nut; cashew; chestnut; filbert/hazelnut; macadamia nut; pecan; pine nut (pignolia nut); pistachio; walnut.

The following are uncommon, additional tree nuts that require disclosure by U.S. law. However, the risk of an allergic reaction to these nuts is unknown: beechnut; ginkgo; shea nut; butternut; hickory; chinquapin; lychee nut; coconut; pili nut.

Source: <http://www.faiusa.org> (Food Allergy Initiative)