Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Program

This flow chart describes the SFA process for handling requests for modifications.

SFA/school receives a request for a meal modification from:

State Licensed Healthcare Professional

Does the medical statement include all of the following?

- Information about how a child's physical or mental or physical impairment restricts the diet (no specific diagnosis required)
- Explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child's disability
- The food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, in the case of a meal modification
- Signature from a State licensed healthcare professional

Yes

SFA must accommodate the request.
The SFA should try to accommodate within the meal pattern if possible.

Student's meal does not have to meet the meal pattern requirements to be reimbursable.

SFA may not use OVS to accommodate the request.

No

SFA must work with parent/guardian to obtain appropriate clarification to ensure a proper and safe meal is provided.

SFAs must not contact the State licensed healthcare professional to get a complete medical statement.

While waiting for the updated statement, SFA should follow the portion of the medical statement that is clear. SFA should not delay or deny a modification because the medical statement does not provide recommended alternatives.

Parent/Guardian

Is the request for a medical condition?

Yes

Can the accommodation be made within the meal pattern?

No

A medical statement must be obtained to accommodate the request.

Contact parent/ guardian to request a medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional.

Yes

Accommodate the request within the meal pattern.

A medical statement is not required.

The SFA may require one and the requirements must be described in their written procedure.

SFA may not use OVS to accommodate the request.

No

A request based on a food, health, ethical, or religious preference is not a disability.

SFA is not required to accommodate preferences but may choose to make meal modifications.

If modifications are made, they must meet the USDA meal pattern requirements.

Citations and References:

1. P 40-2017 2017 Edition Disability Manual (azureedge.us)
2. Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Q&As | Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)
3. Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs | Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)

It is recommended, but not required, that the diet prescription be renewed annually.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.