

Shepherd Handbook on Food Allergies

Shepherd Elementary is a **nut free school**. This includes peanuts and tree nuts (Almond, Brazil nut, Beechnut, Butternut, Cashew, Coconut, Filbert/hazelnut, Macadamia nut, Pecan, Pine nut, Pistachio & Walnut). Do not send any of these items or food containing these items to school including lunch, snacks and classroom parties.

Why are there so many more kids with food allergies now than when I was a kid?

Food allergies are on the rise, but no one knows why. The percentage of children with a food allergy has increased by about 50% between 1997 and 2011. Around 15 million people in the United States have a food allergy. One in 13 children in the U.S. now have a food allergy.

Children can react to an allergen by eating or touching a food they're allergic to. They can also react by touching something that has traces of that food on it, such as peanut butter residue. If they have traces of food on their hands and put their hands in their mouth, they can have a life threatening reaction.

Shepherd Elementary is committed to keeping our school safe for all our children. To that end, **do not send any nuts or food containing nuts (ie. peanut butter, granola bars with nuts, Nutella, etc). with your child to school.**

About Peanut and Tree Nut Food Labeling

For children with nut allergies, care must be taken to avoid accidental exposure. This includes eating peanuts or tree nuts, but also foods that have been "cross-contaminated" in preparation (at home or in the stores and bakeries) in the manufacturing process.

If you know there is a child with nut allergies in your class and you are supplying snacks or treats for a party, please check labels carefully.

By law, companies are required to list foods that contain the 8 most common allergens, including peanuts and tree nuts. This information will be found underneath the nutrition labeling and list of ingredients.

Many companies, ***though not required***, will also list if their food has been manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts and/or tree nuts. When provided, this information can be found in the same place just below the list of allergens contained in the product.

Below is a picture of a label from Whole Foods pretzels that shows they do not contain nuts, but have been manufactured in a facility that processes them. Please do your best to avoid buying cross-contaminated items as well as those that actually contain nuts.



Please consider your own risks for creating cross-contamination. If bringing in sliced fruit or similar items for a class party, please make sure you are using a fully cleaned knife and cutting board. ***Please do not prepare snacks for the class after making a PBJ sandwich.***

If you are planning on making or baking a homemade treats from scratch, ***please note that ingredients (like raisins) from the grocery store's bulk bins are virtually certain to have been in contact with peanuts or tree nuts at one time and are therefore are cross-contaminated.***

There is a simple rule. If there isn't a label on the package of the list of ingredients it is not safe.

There are options! Sunbutter and "WOW Butter" are great nut free substitutes for peanut butter. The following link is a recent "safe snack guide". This group produces lists of safe snacks for those with peanut, tree nut and egg allergy. You can certainly purchase other snacks for class, but this list might provide some helpful suggestions. Also, Giant and Whole Foods sell "nut-free" and "facility safe" cupcakes that are great for class parties.

<http://snacksafely.com/download>