

Transforming Medical Diets

Clearer | Faster | Safer

Supporting Documentation
for Operations and Catering Teams
of Primary Schools

Taylor Shaw
Seeing food differently

Transforming Medical Diets

Clearer | Faster | Safer

This support pack contains everything you need to know about the new allergy aware menus that will be implemented from the start of the SS26 menu cycle.

You can find this support pack on Teams in **Education Marketing Ops > Operations Information > Medical Diets & Nutrition Standards > Allergy Aware Menu Support**

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CONTACT DETAILS

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BACKGROUND

We are transforming the way in which we deliver medical diets for children with allergies that fall within the EU FIC 14 allergens (Top 14).

The EU FIC 14 allergens are: cereals containing gluten (barley, kamut, oat, rye, spelt, wheat), celery, crustacean, egg, fish, lupin, milk, mollusc, mustard, peanut, sesame, soya, sulphur dioxide/ sulphites and tree nut)

Our goal is simple: to make the system **clearer, faster** and **safer** for you, your teams, and most importantly, for the children we serve.

From the start of the SS26 menu cycle, all children with allergies that fall within the **EU FIC 14 allergens** will be on one of three 'Allergy Aware' menus.

'Allergy Aware' Menu Guidance

Menu Title	Menu Avoids	Menu Contains
Allergy Aware Menu 1	All 14 EU FIC allergens	
Allergy Aware Menu 2	Celery, crustacean, fish, lupin, mollusc, mustard, peanut, sesame, tree nuts	Gluten-containing cereals (barley, kamut, oat, rye, spelt, wheat), egg, milk, soya, sulphur dioxide/sulphites
Allergy Aware Menu 3	Celery, crustacean, lupin, mollusc, mustard, peanut, tree nuts	Gluten-containing cereals (barley, kamut, oat, rye, spelt, wheat), egg, fish, milk, sesame, soya, sulphur dioxide/sulphites

INTRODUCING THE NEW ALLERGY AWARE MENUS

Week 1 of the 'Allergy Aware' Menu 1 is shown below. All medical diets will continue to follow a three-week menu cycle.

*Halal Options available
This child can have anything from the Allergy Aware Theme
Day cookbook on theme days

ALLERGY AWARE MENU 1

SPRING SUMMER MENU 2026

*Please be aware not all dishes are available at every school. Whilst we can provide meals without specified allergens, we cannot guarantee they are free from traces of allergens due to shared storage and preparation areas.

WEEK 1

	MAIN MEAL	VEGGIE	
MON	CHICKEN & SWEETCORN MEATBALLS IN A BUN or HALAL CHICKEN SAUSAGE IN A BUN with TOMATO PASTA SALAD	TOMATO & BASIL PASTA SALAD with GARLIC BREAD	VEGGIE SAUSAGE IN A BUN with TOMATO PASTA SALAD
TUE	Mild Beef & Bean Chilli with Yellow Rice	GOLDEN BUTTERNUT & SWEETCORN PASTA	MILD VEGETABLE CHILLI with Yellow Rice
WED	Roast of the Day with Mashed or Roast Potatoes & Gravy	ROASTED VEGETABLE & LENTIL LOAF with Mashed or Roast Potatoes & Gravy	ROASTED VEGETABLE & LENTIL LOAF with Mashed or Roast Potatoes & Gravy
THU	MARGHERITA PIZZA with Jacket Wedges	RAINBOW PLANT POWERED WRAP with Carrot & Cucumber Sticks	MARGHERITA PIZZA with Jacket Wedges
FRI	CRISPY CHICKEN GOUJONS with Chips & Ketchup	VEGGIE GRILL with Chips & Ketchup	VEGGIE SAUSAGE with Chips & Ketchup

CARB CORNER

Jollof Rice with 5 Beans
Jacket Potato with Baked Beans

HOMEMADE DESSERTS

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
CHOCOLATEY FUDGE CAKE	CINNAMON SWIRLED SHORTBREAD	Strawberry Jelly	VANILLA COOKIE & Fruit Slices	SHORTBREAD FINGERS

VEGGIE STATION

Daily Selection of Vegetables: Baked Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Country Mix Veg, Sweetcorn, Peas,
Daily Mixed Salad of Carrot, Cucumber, Lettuce & Tomato

SANDWICHES

AA SANDWICH WITH HAM OR HUMMUS & GRATED CARROT

COOL N' FRUITY

Apple, Banana, Watermelon, Melon, Orange
Strawberry Jelly

PUPIL NAME: John Smith

SCHOOL:

Fresh Look & Feel

- As you can see, the look and feel of the medical diet menus has been completely updated. The new design is bright and engaging for primary school children, while remaining clear and well-structured for parents and catering teams.
- This template design is consistent for **all medical diets**.
- It is unbranded just as our medical diets have always been. This is because schools use different branding (Eat Smart, Fab 4 and Eativerse) so having a 'neutral' medical diet template is vital.
- As usual, we are offering our main meal choices alongside vegetarian options and a dessert selection.
- Jacket potatoes, jollof rice and pasta options are displayed in the new 'Carb Corner'
- Vegetables are shown in the new 'Veggie Station' section
- Sandwiches remain available as usual.
- Fresh fruit, jelly and yoghurt (if suitable for the child) is listed under the new 'Cool & Fruity' section.

Balancing Safety with Inclusivity

To make the menu more positive for parents and children, we no longer list foods that children *cannot* have. This means:

- If an item is **NOT** written on the menu, you **MUST NOT** serve it.
- **Only serve the dishes written on the menu.**

To keep the menu inclusive, **some medical diet recipes may have the same name as standard recipes**. You will know which recipe to use by how the dish is written on the menu.

For example:

MARGHERITA PIZZA - As this is written in ***BOLD CAPITAL ITALICS*** it shows that this is a medical diet recipe. Medical diet recipes can be found in the [Medical Diet Recipe Pack](#).

Margherita Pizza – Standard text shows this is a standard recipe found in the [Standard Recipe Pack](#).

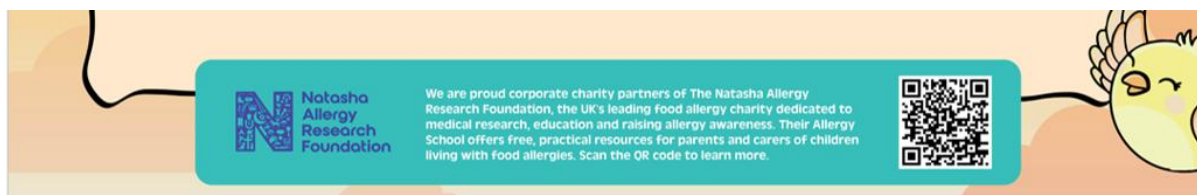
Important: Catering Teams must:

- Match the recipe name on the menu with the same recipe name in the correct cookbook.
- Follow the recipe exactly as written.
- Use the correct ingredients with the correct ingredient codes.
- Not add any extra ingredients or make any changes to the recipe

Proud to Partner: The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation

Elior is a proud charity partner of the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation (NARF) the UK's leading food allergy charity dedicated to medical research, education and raising allergy awareness.

The back page of medical diet menus now includes a QR code which parents can scan to take them to NARF's 'Allergy School' website. This hosts practical resources for parents on how to keep children with food allergies safe.



SELECTING THE CORRECT MEDICAL DIET MENU

Operations Managers are responsible for ensuring that the correct menu is downloaded for each child.

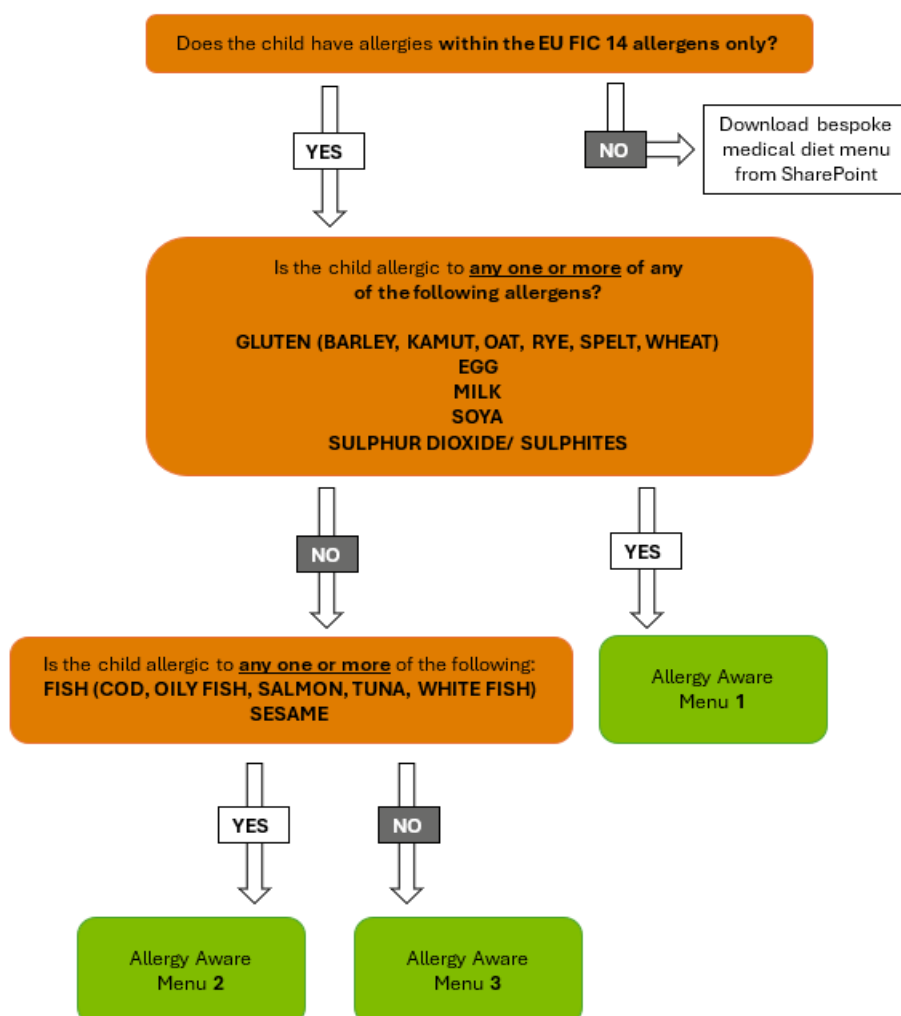
If a child has **any allergies outside the Top 14**, or a **combination of allergies both within and outside the Top 14**, you must download their **bespoke medical diet menu** from SharePoint as usual.

Example: If a child's allergies in LunchHound are listed as **EGG & LENTIL**, you must go to SharePoint and download the **EGG & LENTIL AVOIDANCE MENU** for the current menu cycle.

If the child's allergies **fall only within the Top 14**, use the **Allergy Aware Menu flowchart** to determine which 'Allergy Aware' menu they require.

You can find the Allergy Aware Menu Selector in two places:

- **Teams: Education Marketing Ops > Operations Information > Medical Diets & Nutrition Standards > Allergy Aware Menu Support**
- **SharePoint (where the medical diet menus are located): UK – Medical Diet – Documents > SPRING SUMMER 26**



BENEFITS OF THE ALLERGY AWARE MENUS

This development helps drive greater inclusivity, allowing more children with allergies and intolerances to enjoy the same, or similar, meals as one another. Our Allergy Aware menus mirror the standard school offering as closely as possible, while ensuring the utmost safety.

We continue to offer one of the most versatile medical diet menus in the sector, featuring meat and halal options, a choice of two vegetarian/vegan dishes, as well as sandwiches, jacket potatoes, vegetable rice, desserts and fresh fruit.

Fresh Tastes

These enhancements have made our allergy menus more varied and exciting than ever. New additions include top 14 allergen-free crunchy chicken goujons, garlic bread, a hummus and grated carrot sandwich and ice cream. Seasonal flavours also bring a taste of Summer to the table, with Mexican enchiladas, banana cookies, juicy pineapple cake, and barbecue-style favourites such as burgers and hot dogs. Alongside these new dishes, we have retained much-loved classics, including roast dinners, freshly made pizzas, gooey chocolate fudge cake and the traditional school favourite, iced sponge cake.

Building Children's Futures

We know that school meals go far beyond the classroom and help shape healthy habits for life. A varied, balanced diet supports mood, concentration and learning, so our menus include a wide range of foods designed to support overall wellbeing.

Nutritional Benefits:

Food for Growth - All meat and vegetarian main meal choices provide over a third of the recommended daily protein intake, giving children the essential building blocks they need to grow, play and learn. Plant-based proteins such as beans, lentils and chickpeas feature in dishes including chillies, pastas and curries. These ingredients support gut health, help maintain steady energy levels and benefit the environment.

Eating a Rainbow - Our three-week menu features more than 35 different plant foods, including a colourful variety of fruits, vegetables, pulses, herbs and spices. Vitamin C-rich foods such as peppers, melon, oranges, blueberries and broccoli help support immunity, healing and iron absorption.

Strong Bones and Teeth - Spring cabbage, kidney beans, broccoli, baked beans and fortified sandwich bread and cake flour all contribute towards children's daily calcium requirements.

Healthy Development - A wide variety of whole foods across the menu provide key nutrients such as zinc, magnesium and B vitamins, which support energy production, mood and brain development. Rapeseed oil supplies essential fatty acids that aid vitamin absorption and help maintain a healthy nervous system and brain.

Fuelling the Day - The menu provides the carbohydrates children need to stay energised throughout the day. Iron from meat, poultry, pulses, leafy greens and fortified bread supports healthy red blood cells and helps prevent tiredness.

The Right Balance - We want to ensure no child feels hungry, so we carefully create meals that balance enjoyment with good nutrition. We focus on whole foods and have carefully managed special dietary products, which can be overly processed, less nutritious and higher in salt.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does having dedicated Allergy Aware Menus improve safety?

Food allergies in the UK have more than doubled over the past 20 years, with hospital admissions for anaphylaxis increasing significantly. Multiple and complex allergies are becoming more common, and many children are now diagnosed with more than one allergy. When catering teams work from a smaller number of clearly defined menus, there are fewer variations to manage. This reduces the risk of mistakes when checking product codes, selecting ingredients or following recipes. Staff become more familiar with procedures, which improves accuracy and confidence. With fewer allergens in the preparation area, the likelihood of accidental cross-contamination is greatly reduced. For operations managers, having fewer menu combinations to choose from when downloading medical diet menus also reduces errors, saves time on medical diet administration and simplifies processes.

Will menu options be more limited as a result?

This development helps drive greater inclusivity, allowing more children with allergies and intolerances to enjoy the same, or similar, meals as one another. Our Allergy Aware menus mirror the standard school offering as closely as possible, while ensuring the utmost safety.

We continue to provide one of the most versatile medical diet menus in the sector, including meat and halal options, two vegetarian/vegan choices, as well as sandwiches, jacket potatoes, vegetable rice, desserts and fresh fruit.

Are the 'Allergy Aware' menus still nutritious?

The menus are highly nutritious, offering a balanced range of foods that support children's growth, learning and long-term health. All main meals provide over a third of the recommended daily protein intake, with plant-based options like beans, lentils and chickpeas supporting steady energy and gut health. Across the three-week cycle, children are served more than 35 different plant foods, including vitamin-C-rich fruits and vegetables that aid immunity and iron absorption. Ingredients such as spring cabbage, kidney beans, broccoli, and fortified cake flour and sandwich bread contribute to daily calcium needs, while whole foods supply key nutrients like zinc, magnesium and B vitamins for energy, mood and brain development. Essential fatty acids from rapeseed oil support vitamin absorption and a healthy nervous system, and a variety of carbohydrate foods helps keep children energised throughout the day. By focusing on whole foods and limiting highly processed and salty special-diet products, we have improved the overall content of vitamins, minerals, protein and fibre.

Why has vegan cheese been removed as a sandwich and jacket potato filling?

It is important that children are offered and encouraged to choose the most nutritious options for their lunch, including foods that are good sources of vitamins, minerals, protein and fibre. Adding vegan cheese to jacket potatoes and sandwiches provides limited nutritional benefit while increasing the overall salt content. Although vegan cheese is used in some of the dishes in the menu, this is balanced with other whole ingredients to create a varied and nutritionally balanced meal.

Will you continue to provide a vegan menu?

Yes. This will be available as usual in its own folder on SharePoint for Operations Team to download.

How do I know which menu to select?

To determine which menu to download for a child, use the **Allergy Aware Menu Selector** (see p6). Remember, 'Allergy Aware' menus are for children with allergies that fall within the Top 14 only. All other medical diet children will have their own bespoke menu as per previous menu cycles.

The Allergy Aware Menu selector is available on Teams: **Education Marketing Ops > Operations Information > Medical Diets & Nutrition Standards > Allergy Aware Menu Support**

It is also available on SharePoint in the same place the medical diet menus are located:
UK – Medical Diet – Documents > SPRING SUMMER 26

Where will the medical diet menus be located?

All menus are in the usual place on SharePoint: **UK – Medical Diet – Documents > SPRING SUMMER 26**

Inside the **SPRING SUMMER 26** folder you will find the following four folders:

- **1. Standard** (for sites following the core menu)
- **2. No Pork** (for sites following the pork free menu)
- **3. No Beef & No Pork** (for sites following the no pork and no beef menu)
- **4. Site Specific** (for sites with an agreed bespoke menu due to airborne allergies)

In each of these folders there will be the following two folders:

- **ALLERGY AWARE MENUS 1, 2 & 3** (for children with **Top 14 allergies only**)
- **BESPOKE MEDICAL DIET MENUS** (for children with allergies **outside the Top 14**, children with a **combination of allergies both within and outside the Top 14**, and children with **medical conditions requiring an adapted menu and carbohydrate counts**).

There are chicken goujons on a Friday for those can't have fish – what happens if we are a Catholic school and cannot serve meat on that day?

Children who are unable to have the fish option and attend Catholic schools where meat cannot be served on Fridays should be served their safe vegetarian choice. This is no different from current practice.

What do we do when parents questions why their child who is gluten free, but now follows a menu that also excludes also milk, egg etc?

We have prepared communications to reassure parents and inform them of the benefits of having menus that exclude multiple allergens. These are available on Teams: **Education Marketing Ops > Operations Information > Medical Diets & Nutrition Standards > Allergy Aware Menu Support**

What about TMF, complex medical diets? Will they produced in the same way as before?

Yes. All TMF menus, combinations of inside and outside top 14, and menus adapted due to medical conditions such as PKU, will all be written in exactly the same way as before. The only difference is that they will be written onto the new menu template.

I sometimes have to prepare dishes that don't match my standard menu. Will the medical diet dishes be more streamlined, so I am not making so many variations?

The Allergy Aware menus follow the central menu as closely as possible. Occasionally, schools choose to go outside the central menu framework because they want a few bespoke options. Medical diet menus will not reflect these bespoke menu choices, and this has always been the case.

We are aware that schools sometimes swap menu days, for example serving Thursday's dish on a Monday. If this happens, it is fine to swap the days on the medical diet menu to match the main school menu so that the Catering Team is not preparing additional variations. So long as a dish appears on a child's medical diet menu, it does not matter which day it is served.

With the introduction of the new Allergy Aware menus, more children with medical diets will be eating the same option, which should help reduce workload in the kitchen.

My child is only allergic to egg and milk. Why does he have to have gluten free products that are likely to taste different and be highly processed?

Thank you for getting in touch and for sharing your concerns about the upcoming introduction of our Allergy Aware menu. I completely understand why you would have questions about how this affects your child, and I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the purpose behind the changes.

The aim of the Allergy Aware menu is not to further limit a child's diet. Our priority is to create a safer, more consistent, and more inclusive system across all schools we cater for. In busy school kitchens, managing multiple individual allergen requirements significantly increases the risk of accidental cross-contamination. By removing the top 14 allergens from designated dishes, we can provide meals that are safer, easier to manage operationally, and far more reliable for children with a wide range of allergies.

A key benefit of this approach is inclusivity. The 'Allergy Aware' dishes allow as many children as possible with different allergies and intolerances to enjoy the same meals, reducing the sense of separation or difference during mealtimes. These menus have been designed to mirror the standard school offering as closely as possible while keeping safety at the forefront.

In relation to your child's specific allergies to milk and egg, I understand your concerns around them receiving gluten-free replacements when gluten is not one of their allergens, particularly your concerns around taste, texture, and processing. Nutrition, ingredient quality and menu enjoyment have been central considerations in developing our new menu. We have been extremely mindful of avoiding an overreliance on processed, bought-in gluten-free products. For that reason, our 'Allergy Aware' burger buns, bread rolls, pizza bases, garlic bread and puddings are all made from scratch in our school kitchens, using carefully selected ingredients to ensure they are both safe and enjoyable.

Our intention is always to provide a balanced, nutritious, and appealing meal for every child, including those with restricted diets. We will continue to monitor pupil and parent feedback closely throughout the summer term as we implement our new menus.

What is the Allergy Aware Menu and why has it been introduced?

The Allergy Aware menu is a designated meal option that is free from all Top 14 allergens. Its purpose is to:

- Improve safety by reducing the risk of cross-contamination.
- Provide consistency across all school kitchens.
- Increase inclusivity, allowing more children with different allergies to enjoy the same meal.
- Reduce reliance on individually tailored meals, which can be difficult to manage safely in busy kitchens.

Why are gluten-free products used for children who are not allergic to gluten?

Gluten is one of the Top 14 allergens. To maintain a safe completely top 14 allergen avoidance menu, dishes must avoid gluten entirely. Although some children may not personally avoid gluten, the ingredients ensure that the menu remains safe, inclusive, and consistent. Nutritional quality has been carefully considered, and wherever possible, items are made in-house to avoid unnecessary processing.

Why are sandwich options currently limited on Allergy Aware Menu 1?

The aim of the Allergy Aware menu is to create a safer, more consistent, and more inclusive system across all schools we cater for. In busy school kitchens, managing multiple individual allergen requirements significantly increases the risk of accidental cross-contamination. By removing the top 14 allergens from designated dishes, we can provide meals that are safer, easier to manage operationally, and far more reliable for children with a wide range of allergies. With this in mind, all sandwich fillings must also avoid the Top 14 allergens on Allergy Aware Menu 1. Current options include hummus and grated carrot, and ham. We have avoided using milk free cheese as a sandwich and jacket potato filling due to its lack of nutritional value. We are actively reviewing additional fillings that avoid the Top 14 allergens with the goal of widening choice in the future.

Will the Allergy Aware menu change or expand over time?

Yes. The menu will continue to evolve based on:

- New ingredient availability
- Feasibility in school kitchens
- Nutritional standards
- Feedback from pupils, staff, and parents

How should we respond when parents express concerns about taste or processing levels of Allergy Aware Menu 1?

You can reassure parents that:

- Nutrition and ingredient quality were key considerations in menu development.
- Many items are homemade to avoid over-processing.
- We regularly review feedback and continually improve recipes.
- Our goal is to provide meals that are safe, nutritious, and enjoyable for all children.

Any concerns can be escalated to the Nutrition team for support.

