

## Special dietary meals

- The Healthy School Lunches programme aims to meet the dietary needs of all students. ‘Special diets’ refers to the most common dietary requirements, not personal taste preferences.
- Meal providers must safely cater to common food allergies, intolerances, and religious or ethical needs.
- Additional support is available when catering for students with complex dietary needs. For support with special dietary meals, contact your Healthy School Lunches Nutritionist or Senior Advisor, or email [school.lunches@education.govt.nz](mailto:school.lunches@education.govt.nz).

### Who can access special dietary meals?

Students who can access special dietary meals will have one or more of the following:

- a food allergy
- a food intolerance
- ethical food requirements
- religious food requirements

#### What is a food allergy?



An immune response where the body identifies the food as harmful.

**Food allergies can be severe and potentially life-threatening**

Food allergens that suppliers must cater for:

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts
- Wheat
- Dairy (cow’s milk)
- Soy
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Sesame
- Kiwifruit
- Egg

#### What is a food intolerance?



Difficulty in digesting certain foods resulting in uncomfortable symptoms like stomach pain, bloating, diarrhoea, skin rashes or itching.

**The two most common food intolerances are gluten and lactose**

#### What is an ethical food requirement?



Food choices based on personal or cultural values, beliefs or principles often linked to concerns such as environmental sustainability, social justice, and animal welfare.

**Vegan and vegetarian diets are examples of this**

#### What is a religious food requirement?



Specific dietary rules followed by certain religions that determine what foods can be eaten and how they should be prepared and consumed.

**Halal practices are an example of this**

Some students have dietary requirements that are more complex than those outlined above. Additional support is available to assist with meeting these specialised needs.