

Menu planning for kosher-style meals

Early childhood services



The information presented in this resource is intended as a guide only. Cooks preparing food at a long day care centre should speak with a child's parents or carers about specific dietary customs and foods which are permitted and not permitted.

What is kosher?

Kosher food is food prepared according to the dietary laws of Judaism, also known as Kashrut. Kosher foods are divided into three main categories: Meat, Dairy, and Parve (Pareve).

The info boxes below provide some examples of the different food categories.

MEAT

- Examples of kosher meats include: beef, lamb, veal, goat, and sheep
- Examples of kosher poultry (birds) include: chicken or turkey



Meat must have a kosher certification

Animals and poultry must be prepared according to the Jewish laws of Kashrut. This means that even if meat or poultry comes from a kosher animal, a person who keeps kosher cannot eat it unless it has a kosher certification.

DAIRY

- Dairy products (milk, cheese, yoghurt) must come from a kosher animal
- Dairy products cannot include any ingredient which comes from meat
- Cheese made with rennet is not kosher because rennet comes from animals
- Dairy products must have a kosher certification



Keep meat and dairy separate

Dairy and meat cannot be consumed together. A person who keeps kosher will not eat meat and dairy in the same meal and will wait a certain amount of time between eating meat and dairy.

PARVE (PAREVE)

Parve foods are not meat or dairy and can be consumed at any time. Examples of Parve foods include:

- Eggs must be from a kosher bird only and checked to ensure there are no blood spots
- Fish must have both fins and scales. Examples of kosher fish includes tuna and salmon
- Fish must not be eaten or cooked together with meat. Fish and meat can be eaten in the same meal, but as separate courses
- Grains which are kosher certified
- Fruit and vegetables

FOODS NOT CONSIDERED KOSHER

Some foods do not fit into the above categories and are not considered kosher.

These include:

- Examples of non-kosher meats include pork, rabbit, kangaroo, and crocodile
- Animals and poultry that have not been slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law
- Shellfish
- Insects (check salads and vegetables are washed and well checked for insects)
- Any processed or packaged foods which do not have a Hechsher (Kosher certification)
- Other non-kosher food derivatives, such as gelatine. These ingredients are sometimes used in processed or packaged foods, for example, gelatine used in lollies, marshmallows or yoghurt.

Kosher certification

Food manufacturing companies often seek kosher certification for their products. A kosher certification is known as a Hechsher.

Kosher certification guarantees that the ingredients, machinery production facilities, and all processes are thoroughly inspected to ensure they follow all laws of Kashrut. It also means the product does not include any non-kosher elements.

TIP:

The [Kosher Australia website and App](https://www.kosheraustralia.com.au) can be used to check if a food is kosher.

Considerations for keeping kosher

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- A meal that is strictly kosher must be prepared in a kosher kitchen. This means having separate dishes and cooking utensils for meat and dairy foods and storing meat separately.
- Meat and dairy must not be served or eaten together during the same meal, and it is customary to wait between eating meat and dairy. This can be up to six hours.
- With these considerations in mind, many kosher centres provide a menu where only foods from the dairy and parve groups are served. This might look like more of a vegetarian menu, with the inclusion of fish, egg, and dairy products.
- If your centre is not kosher, but you are catering for children who keep kosher, you can use the information in this resource to provide appropriate kosher-style meals.
- It's important to speak with the parents or carers of children who keep kosher to agree on the foods you will provide for their child.



Recipe modifications

The following examples demonstrate how common recipes can be adapted for children requiring kosher-style meals.

The recipes provide suggestions for meals which use ingredients from the Dairy and Parve groups only.

The recipes and suggested modifications are intended as a guide only. It is important to check with the child's parents or carers which foods are appropriate to serve.



Remember to always check for other food allergies, intolerances, and dietary requirements when replacing ingredients.



TIP:

For more recipe ideas, visit the Healthy Eating Advisory Service [recipe](#) collection.

EXAMPLE RECIPE	SUGGESTED MODIFICATION	SUGGESTED RECIPE
Chicken curry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace chicken with a kosher white fish Use kosher certified stock and coconut milk 	Fish curry
Chicken stir-fry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace chicken with kosher certified tofu 	Vegetable stir fry
Chicken noodle soup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace chicken with other lentils, legumes, or chickpeas 	Vegetable lentil soup Minestrone Vegan dhal
Spaghetti bolognese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace beef mince with brown lentils Use kosher certified tomato paste and cheese 	Lentil Bolognese
Spaghetti meatballs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace with falafel and use chickpeas Replace with tuna patties, and use kosher certified tuna 	Falafel Tuna patties
Beef lasagna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace mince with brown lentils 	Vegetarian lasagna
Beef tacos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace beef mince with a kosher white fish Use kosher certified cheese and tortillas or flatbread 	
Beef chili con carne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace beef mince with red kidney beans and chickpeas Use kosher certified cheese 	Vegetarian chilli con carne
Pork fried rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swap pork for eggs (ensure eggs are checked for blood spots) or kosher certified tofu Use kosher certified soy sauce 	Vegetarian fried rice

More helpful resources and information

For more information see the Healthy Eating Advisory Services [Managing allergies and other dietary requirements in children's education and care](#) online course.

Further information and support

Healthy Eating Advisory Service:

- [Early childhood services](#)
- [Recipes](#)
- [Menu planning guidelines for long day care](#)
- Online module: [other dietary requirements and preferences](#)



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