

PEANUT AND TREE NUT ALLERGY GUIDELINES ADOPTED BY MANAGEMENT BOARD JANUARY 22, 2019



Foundry
United Methodist Church
Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

According to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion of the Centers for Disease Control:

"Food allergy is an abnormal immune response to certain food(s) that the body reacts to as harmful. Estimates of the prevalence of food allergies range from approximately 4% to 8% of children and 2% of adults. There are eight foods that account for 90% of all food-allergy reactions: cow's milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts (for example, walnuts, pecans, almonds, and cashews), fish, shellfish, soybeans, and wheat. Combined, food allergies cause 30,000 cases of anaphylaxis, 2,000 hospitalizations, and 150 deaths annually. The best method for managing food allergies is prevention by way of strict avoidance of any food that triggers a reaction." Why should peanut allergies be considered differently from other food allergies? What distinguishes a peanut allergy is the severity of the reaction. In some extremely sensitive individuals, ingestion of even trace amounts of peanut can stimulate a reaction. In severe cases, treatment must be administered at once to prevent a fatality."

Given this reality, it is prudent for Foundry UMC to take the steps to minimize the exposure and therefore the risk of medical emergencies resulting from peanut and tree nut allergies.

FOUNDRY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PEANUT AND TREE NUT ALLERGY GUIDELINES

- 1.** It is understood that it is impossible to eliminate the risk of exposure by sensitive individuals to nut allergens.
- 2.** It is possible and prudent, however, to take reasonable actions that stand to reduce the risk of exposure. Such actions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - A.** Applying basic risk management principles to addressing the issue. (e.g. Prioritizing risk events by their impact and likelihood and addressing the risks in priority order).
 - B.** Providing guidance and direction to the Foundry ministry leaders to work to minimize the risks from nut allergens to sensitive individuals, without attempting to specify in detail all of the actions that should be taken (i.e. separate policy from procedure).
 - C.** Providing a framework and example that can be expanded if necessary to other allergens, such as shellfish, should Foundry staff become aware that individuals that are sensitive to these other allergens participate in Foundry sponsored events.



POLICY DETAILS

Children and Youth

The Director of Family Ministries in conjunction with Foundry's Health and Safety Ministry team, will develop procedures to minimize the exposure of children sensitive to nut allergens to those allergens while they are participating in Foundry Family Ministry events, such as Nursery, Sunday School and Children's Worship (i.e. while they are under the supervision of Foundry children's ministry workers or volunteers, rather than the direct supervision of their parents.) These procedures might include (but are not limited to) the following:

- A.** Labeling Children's Education rooms with signs indicating that that nut products are prohibited in the rooms.
- B.** Informing all children's workers and volunteers of Foundry's policy and procedures and seeking their agreement to abide by these procedures prior to their assignment to work with children.
- C.** Informing parents of children who participate in Foundry Family Ministry events of the policy and procedures.
- D.** Requiring that the parents of first-time participants in Foundry's Family Ministry be registered and that they disclose whether their children have any allergies and, if so, the identity of the allergens, the severity of their child's reaction, and the doctor-recommended steps that should be taken in the event of exposure.
- E.** Requiring that children with allergies wear an appropriate allergy alert sticker and that those allergies be printed on their nametag.

The leadership of outside groups that regularly utilize Foundry's Children's Ministry spaces (such as the Jewish Community Center Preschool, YMCA, etc.) shall agree to abide by Foundry Church's policies to minimize the exposure of children sensitive to nut allergens to those allergens including (but not limited to) prohibiting nut products from entering their classrooms.

Church-Wide Events

- 1.** In this context, a church-wide event is defined to be an event, such as a potluck dinner, that is open to the Foundry congregation as a whole, which means that the event coordinator has no reasonable way of knowing whether any allergen-sensitive individuals will attend or who those individuals might be.
- 2.** At church-wide events, all children must be under the direct supervision of their parents. Therefore, it is the parent's responsibility to assess the risk of exposure of sensitive children to allergens, and to take appropriate steps to minimize or eliminate that exposure.



3. For church-wide events at which the food being served is under the direct control of a coordinator (person or committee) (i.e. where the food is to be purchased, catered, or prepared under the direction of the coordinator), the coordinator shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the food is nut-allergen free. Labels identifying each offering and its ingredients should be placed immediately adjacent to each item.
4. For church-wide events at which the food is provided by the participants (e.g. potluck dinners), the coordinator shall request that the participants contribute only nut-free foods, preferably as part of the event announcement or food sign-up process. However, for this type of event, all attendees should be advised by prominent signage, on display where the food is being served, that although participants have all been asked to contribute only nut-free foods, Foundry cannot guarantee the absence of nuts or other allergens in the food being served, and therefore all participants, but especially the parents of nut-allergen sensitive children, are advised to use their own best judgment in determining which foods they or their children may safely eat.

Use of Church Facilities by Foundry Ministries for Targeted Events

In this context, a targeted event is defined to be an event, such as a meeting or event which requires RSVPs, and the responses or other circumstances allow the coordinator (person or committee) to reliably assess whether or not nut-allergen sensitive individuals will be participating in the event. (i.e. If it is an adult only event, and all of the adults are known to be non-sensitive, then there will be no direct exposure at the event.)

When the coordinator determines that nut-allergen sensitive individuals will be participating, then the coordinator shall follow the same precautions described above for church-wide events.

If the coordinator believes that no sensitive individuals will be participating, then the coordinator should still err on the side of providing nut-free foods wherever possible, and should ensure that adequate cleanup is performed after the event to remove food residue. The following three step process to remove food allergens from countertops and fixtures is as follows:

1. **Wash:** With warm, soapy water and a single-use towel, wipe down all surfaces.
2. **Rinse:** Fill a spray bottle with fresh water. Spray surfaces that have been cleaned with soapy water. Wipe with a clean, single-use towel.
3. **Sanitize:** With single-use, sanitized towels or wipes, polish surfaces and let them air dry.

Other effective surface-cleaning methods include commercial cleaning wipes that contain detergent or all-purpose detergent spray cleaners used with paper towels or clean cloths.



Use of Church Facilities by non-Foundry Ministries.

This type of event is an occurrence, such as a wedding reception, where an outside party requests use of Foundry facilities for a specific purpose and time, under the terms of the Foundry building use policy.

Foundry UMC assumes no responsibility for food associated with this type of event.

The Foundry building use coordinator shall take reasonable measures to ensure that all Foundry facilities used by the non-Foundry event shall be cleaned so as to remove food residue. (i. e. When Foundry tables are used they shall be wiped down following the three step process listed above.

Disclaimer

These guidelines are an act of service by the congregation of Foundry United Methodist Church to our members and visitors who may be sensitive to peanut and tree nut allergens, and their children. It represents our best understanding of the steps that might be taken to minimize the risk of exposure of sensitive individuals to nut allergens while participating in Foundry sponsored events on Foundry's premises. However, it needs to be understood that it is not possible to completely eliminate risk. Therefore, participants and parents of nut-allergen sensitive children are advised to use their own best judgment with regards to any specific event. Foundry staff members are available prior to events to help inform these decisions. Nothing in this policy should be understood that Foundry United Methodist Church assumes liability in the event of a nut-related allergic reaction.

