



Cooking Group Guidelines

Meal Preparation at the Ronald McDonald House

Thank you for your interest in the Ronald McDonald House. Meals are very important to the families and help sustain them during this very stressful time in their child's medical treatment. The families appreciate a hot, home-cooked meal prepared by caring individuals in a clean and safe environment. Please be aware that for the health and safety of our families, hand washing will be required upon check in to the kitchen and frequently during meal preparation. Please wear gloves when serving the food. We want our cooking groups to feel "at home" in our wonderful kitchen, but must ask that our cooks refrain from sampling of foods or licking of fingers while preparing food items. Please review all of this information with your group prior to organizing a meal.

Breakfast is served at 7:00 a.m. during the week and 8:00 a.m. on weekends, Sunday Brunch around 10:30 a.m. Lunch at 12 noon, and Dinner is served at 5:30 p.m.

What Time Can We Begin Cooking?

- You may arrive as early as **6:00 a.m. during the week and 7:00 a.m. on the weekends** to prepare **breakfast**.
- You may arrive around **9:00 a.m.** to prepare **brunch (Brunch is only served on Sunday.)**
- Please do not arrive before **10:00 a.m.** to prepare **lunch**.
- Please do not arrive before **3:00 p.m.** to prepare **dinner**.

How Many People Are We Cooking For? We are not able to provide an exact number in advance due to the fluctuation in our occupancy, but we ask that you **plan for 50 for breakfast, brunch and lunch and 80 for dinner**. Your group is more than welcome to join the families for the meal. When your cooking date draws closer, you will be notified of a more accurate count.

How Many Cooks Does It Take To Prepare a Meal? We suggest a minimum of **5** and a maximum of **12** people and that all are **over the age of 15**. Please do not bring any children younger than 15.

What Supplies Does Our Group Bring?

We have a fully stocked kitchen with pots, pans, cooking utensils, serving bowls, plates, silverware and cups. We also have drinks: iced tea, coffee, milk, and \$.25 sodas. We also have many food items in our pantry. Before purchasing your groceries call the house to see if we have any of the items you may need for your menus. We have a plethora of condiments and salad dressing.

We are now a COMMERCIAL kitchen!

Due to the large size of the kitchen and the number of families we serve in the new house, our kitchen is now a commercial kitchen and will be inspected by the state health department. We must follow certain guidelines to make sure we are up to code and pass the inspection. I have included special guidelines for you to review with your group *before* coming to the new house. Instructions on how to use equipment will be given to you when you arrive. The kitchen is AMAZING and we are confident you will love it! However it is very large and we want to make sure you feel comfortable using it.

Important Rules of the Kitchen

Your group is responsible for planning the menu, shopping for the food and preparing and serving it in the Ronald McDonald House of Dallas kitchen.

All food served to our families must be prepared in our kitchen or in a commercial kitchen or purchased at a store/restaurant. You are no longer allowed to bring already prepared food. *Some exceptions may be made. Please contact Gracie Thompson if you have questions.

Cleaning up the pans, cooking utensils and dishes used in preparing and serving the meal is considered to be part of the activity.

All cooking group volunteers must wash their hands before preparing the food. There is a hand washing sink located in the back of the kitchen next to the ice machine.

All members of the cooking group must wear an apron. The aprons now take the place of nametags and this helps to identify who is a visitor.

The ovens take 20 minutes to pre-heat. Please be sure to first turn on the oven if it is needed.

If you have hair that goes past your shoulders please be sure to tie it back. Hair elastic bands will be provided when necessary. We also have hairnets if you prefer that instead of tying your hair back.

Gloves must be worn while preparing food. Please be sure to remove gloves when cleaning. Hand sanitizer is easily accessible.

We have a cleaning area and a preparing area. Food prep should NOT be done in the cleaning area. The cleaning area is where the dishwashers, sinks and garbage cans are located.

Everything is labeled in the kitchen. Be sure to look through all the cabinets to familiarize yourself to where everything is located.

We have food warmers to keep the food at the right temperature. They are located in the cabinets under the front island.

All food must be served at the proper temperature. There are food thermometers in the top drawer by the 3 compartment sink in the main kitchen. Kitchen volunteers or a staff person will monitor the temperature of the food.

Leftovers are to be placed in the proper refrigerator in small Tupperware containers and are to be labeled with the date and contents.

Dishes must be washed in hot water and sanitized. Families are still allowed to load their own dishes in the dishwashers. Large dishes (pots and pans) must be washed in the 3 compartment sink. (You will be given instructions on how to use the 3 compartment sink when you arrive.)

The garbage disposal is only to be operated by a staff member or trained volunteer.

When the cooking group is finished the dirty aprons should be placed in the dirty hamper and the clean ones should be hung back up. Only put the aprons in the dirty hamper if they are really dirty. Aprons may be worn several times before being washed.

What Should We Cook?

Our goal is to offer families balanced, healthy and flavorful meals. Your help in preparing these healthy meal options can go a long way in providing much-needed energy and stamina for our families who are all supporting their sick or hospitalized children. Don't be afraid to be creative! Just like you, our families enjoy a change of pace. You will be contacted a week prior to your date to see what you are cooking, so we can post it for our guests and try to avoid duplicate meals. Each meal should consist of an entrée, sides, salad/vegetable, and dessert (fruit is a great dessert).

Meal Quantity

A meal at the Ronald McDonald House of Dallas should consist of the following:

- Entrée
- One or two sides AND/OR
- Green Salad
- A starch (Pasta, bread, rice, or potatoes)
- Dessert

We will provide all beverages - milk, iced tea, coffee and water for the families. We have a 25 cent soda machine if the families wish to purchase a soft drink.

We are not able to provide the exact number you will be cooking for at any given meal due to the fluctuation in our occupancy. We do ask that you prepare the meal utilizing the following information:

Prepare breakfast, brunch or lunch for 50 Prepare dinner for 80.

If your group plans to join the families for the meal, which we certainly welcome you to do, please add the total number in your group to the above numbers. To assist you with the quantities needed to prepare a meal for our families, we offer the following **broad** guidelines:

Poultry or Meat	Allow 6 oz. per person For lunch -15 pounds For dinner -26 pounds
Rice and grains	Allow 1.5 ounces as a side dish For lunch - about 4 pounds For dinner -about 6 pounds
Potatoes	Allow 5 oz. per person For lunch - about 12 pounds For dinner -about 22 pounds
Pasta	Allow 4 oz. as a main course For lunch -10 pounds For dinner -17 pounds
Vegetables	Allow 4 oz. per person
Green Salad	Allow 1 oz. per person For lunch -2.5 pounds For dinner -4.5 pounds
Desserts	Allow 1 slice cake, tart or pastry, 4oz. creamy dessert such as pudding or mousse or 5 oz. of ice cream.

If you are preparing a casserole, a general guideline is that a 9x13 pan will feed about 8-10 people as an entrée. There are a number of websites that have quantity cooking information. A few of these are:

www.Recipehut.homestead.com

www.Razzledazzlerecipes.com

www.Texascook.com

<http://www.angelfire.com/bc/incredible/Servesfiftyindex.html>

You can also Google Quantity Cooking recipes and you can find many ideas. One site that has a recipe converter for your favorite recipes is www.thatsmyhome.com.

Arriving to the new house:

- When you come to the house to prepare a meal you will first enter the front gate (off of Bengal Street).
- You will need to buzz in and tell the attendant that you part of the cooking group.
- You will then need to park your car close to the back door which is located by the outdoor play ground. If you have food to unload you may pull your car up to the back loading dock.
- You will then need to buzz in at the back door. Again, you will need to tell the attendant you are a cooking group volunteer. A volunteer will greet you at the back door and have a black cart for you to bring your food into the house. *If you are a breakfast group we typically don't have house volunteers when you arrive so please be sure to leave the back door open for all the members of your group. We will always try to have a volunteer or staff member greet you, however, sometimes we may not be able to do this.
- You will then enter the kitchen through the back. We have a little "locker room" for all group members to store their personal belongings.
- You may store your purses in the cupboards and hang your coats on the racks.
- The main contact person for your group is the only one who needs to sign in.
- There is a white board hanging above the sign-in sheet. This board is our "wish list" board. If there are items that you would like to see in our kitchen please write them on the board. You can also write down if something is not working. This board is mainly for you to be able to communicate with us.

Guidelines for Religious Organizations

We are a "home away from home" for families with seriously ill children and we must be considerate of their needs during this stressful time in their lives. The Ronald McDonald House is not a faith-based organization. We are an agency that welcomes people of all faiths and people of no faith. Volunteers from many congregations and faiths provide meals for our families and their ministry is demonstrated through their kindness, helpfulness and gift of their time and resources.

When a family has spent the day at the hospital with their sick child, met with social workers, chaplains, and doctors, they are seeking a safe place to rest and have a meal. While speaking with a family, showing concern for them and compassion for their pain is appreciated, engaging in prayer services is not appropriate in this setting. Telling a family that you will remember them in your prayers is a welcome thing, but to facilitate a prayer service in this environment is intrusive of their privacy.

We ask that your group not solicit prayer requests from the families, engage in "healing efforts", nor conduct private sessions of prayer with the families at the Ronald McDonald House. Families do not want to disappoint the groups nor decline the offer of prayer when solicited by visitors to the House; therefore we depend upon you to respect their privacy.

We hope your group will want to participate with our agency within these guidelines. Please give this prayerful consideration to assure that our mission and your mission here are compatible.

If you have any questions, please contact Gracie Thompson, Family and Community Activities Coordinator at 214-631-7354 or gthompson@rmhdallas.com.