



Ronald McDonald House of the Four States
3402 S. Jackson, Joplin, MO 64804
417-624-2273

Meal Preparation Guidelines

Welcome to Ronald McDonald House of the Four States. Thank you in advance for providing a meal for our House guests. Your generous support helps to make the Ronald McDonald House of the Four States a “home away from home” for families with children in the hospital.

We hope you enjoy being here as much as the families look forward to a home-cooked meal after a long day at the hospital. To ensure the best experience for you and our families, we offer these guidelines:

- ❶ If you are a first time meal donor, we ask that a member of your group call the Program Assistant to schedule a time for a tour of our House and kitchen areas. Our pantry is stocked with staple items such as milk, canned vegetables, soups, etc. You are welcome to ask the Program Assistant or House Manager to set aside these items for your use. All food is donated, so they may not always be available.
- ❷ All meals must be scheduled in advance. Please call the Program Assistant to review dates & times available. We prefer lunch be served between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 pm. and dinner be served between 5:00 and 6:30 pm. Please arrive in plenty of time to prepare the meal before then.
- ❸ A menu should be prepared ahead of time for approval. This will prevent duplication of meals prepared during the week. The Program Assistant will contact you on Monday prior to your scheduled day to get your menu & let you know the number of guests at our House. You may call the day of your scheduled meal to verify a more accurate count. A Meal Notice will be posted letting the guests know who is cooking, menu selection, and time the meal will be served.
- ❹ Due to limited kitchen and dining space, please limit your group size to no more than **8 people**. It is important that you have enough people to help you set up, and clean up. It is your responsibility to clean up after the meal preparation. **Children must be supervised at all times by an adult.** You are welcome to stay and have dinner with the families.
- ❺ We appreciate your using open bottles of condiments and salad dressings we have on hand before opening new ones. **Unopened items should be given to the volunteer or staff and they will see they are catalogued and placed in the pantry. Please do not put these items in the kitchen cupboards or in the refrigerator as we rotate items from our pantry to be sure food is used according to expiration dates.**

🍴 Items that are packaged in abundance, such as potato chips, bread, cookies should be placed in bowls and served with tongs.

🍴 You do not need to serve your meal. Food may be placed on the center island and families will serve themselves. Our families tend to spend as much time as possible at the hospital and many times do not return to our House at designated meal times. However, it is a great relief for them to know that food will be waiting here for them when they return.

🍴 **Food Safety:**

- ✓ Volunteers must prepare their meals onsite in our kitchen. We are unable to accept donations of food prepared or cooked off site by a volunteer or other groups of individuals.
- ✓ Only packaged food purchased from retail grocery stores in unopened containers or whole fruits or vegetables should be used.
- ✓ Meals prepared at a licensed retail food establishment can be accepted for donation if delivered directly and within a short period of time.
- ✓ Please be sure of the following: hands are washed well before preparing food, food service gloves are worn during preparation (we provide), all meat is thoroughly cooked and leftovers are stored appropriately.
- ✓ We are discouraging the preparation of fried foods using hot cooking oil, i.e. fried chicken. Past experiences with safety and clean-up has necessitated the change.
- ✓ All group members must be free of contagious illnesses (i.e. chicken pox, flu, colds, strep throat, etc.) when volunteering at the House.

🍴 **Cleanup:**

- ✓ All dishes used in meal preparation should be scraped of food particles, rinsed and are required to be run through the dishwasher. Notify the volunteer on duty if you are unable to place all your cooking utensils in the dishwashers.
- ✓ After preparing the meal in our kitchen, all pots & pans and work surfaces should be cleaned up before you leave.
- ✓ The volunteer on duty will place leftovers in covered containers, label them and place in refrigerator.

About Our Families

In everything we do at the Ronald McDonald House of the Four States, we try to put the families first. Think of your time here as an opportunity to interact with our guests. They may be shy and need encouragement to join in, but we must always try to make them feel welcome. Although our families come from a variety of backgrounds, the one thing they all have in common is a loved one in the hospital.

Thank you for all your help and support! Bon Appetit'!