

October 22, 2012

Dear Parents,

Please help our school by sending **non-peanut lunches** for your cold lunch children. GGS does offer a cold lunch program if you would like us to pack the lunch for you!

For generations peanuts have been a favorite, healthy, American snack food. However, the profitable, little protein-packed legume is responsible for about 160 deaths annually in the United States. This is equivalent to 80% of all food allergy fatalities. It is estimated that 1.5 million Americans have peanut allergies. 1.3% of all children exhibit an allergic reaction to peanuts. The most common food trigger of anaphylaxis as well as the most common overall trigger is peanut allergy. Alarmingly, peanut sensitivity on a standard skin prick test has increased by 55%, while allergic reactions increased by 95% in the past ten years. This increase may not only be attributed to increasing sensitivity, but also an increased awareness of allergies and improved reporting and management.

Currently, there are students enrolled at Gallatin Gateway School who are allergic to peanuts, some if they ingest them, while others experience allergic reactions if they come in contact with peanut oils transmitted by contact with people or objects that have come in contact with peanuts or peanut oil.

Gallatin Gateway School has researched ways to prevent exposure for these children, and aside from becoming a peanut-free school, which we feel would be very hard to do, we have adopted some procedures to help limit the exposure. First, hand washing with soap and water or hand sanitizer effectively removes peanut protein from the hands. Therefore, all students leaving the cafeteria after lunch are asked to clean their hands using the hand sanitizer dispensers placed on the tables in the cafeteria. In addition, food service staff is carefully scrubbing down lunch tables between each meal and prohibiting the sharing of any type of food between students.

What can parents do? We are asking that parents to try our wonderful hot lunch or cold lunch at school and limit the sending of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to school. Also we encourage your children to notify the lunchroom staff if they do have any items containing peanuts or peanut butter in their lunch.

In addition, parents are encouraged to bring healthy snacks and/or treats for birthdays that do not contain any peanut related ingredients. If you are unsure, please notify your child's teacher so that he/she can take proper precautions. **Please discuss with your children how important it is for them not to share their food with their peers so everyone is protected from possible health issues.**

Pictured is **Wowbutter**, 100% peanut free has been suggested for those young peanut butter lovers! If you find it locally, please let us know so we can share with other parents.

It has been found at http://www.amazon.com/Tastes-Just-Like-Peanut-Butter-Creamy/dp/B0026BQKT6/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1350938523&sr=8-1&keywords=wowbutter

Thank you for labeling or noting in your child's lunch if you use this so the lunch staff will know our cafeteria is safe :) Thank you!

