



Happy Meal Dinner Guidelines

We appreciate your interest in the "Happy Meal" dinner program. In many communities and cultures, it is tradition for friends and neighbors to prepare meals for loved ones who are caring for a sick family member. The families that stay at Ronald McDonald House are often far away from family, friends and other support systems that would normally help them through a difficult time. The gift of a home cooked meal is a much appreciated act of compassion and kindness and is another way that makes the Ronald McDonald House truly a "home away from home" for our families.

Food Safety Policy

It is the RMHC Global Policy that all food is to be prepared on RMHC property or commercially licensed kitchen. The only exception to this is if purchasing premade food from a retail food establishment (aka: grocery store, Costco etc.) or restaurant which can be accepted if the food has been protected from contamination, and has been delivered directly from the licensed establishment to RMHC or via your group when coming directly from the establishment.

Planning Your Meal

FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY have exceptions to the Planning Your Meal information. Due to limited house volunteers and staff, all meals made on weekends need to be simply prepared meals with leftovers being able to be easily put away with little cleanup for our volunteers or staff person. Hot meals should be prepared in disposable aluminum foil pans. Meal ideas include but not limited to; cold cut sandwiches or hot sandwiches on buns, chips, fresh fruit or veggie tray, pasta salad. Casseroles or meals that can be prepared in disposable pans with one or two simple sides, Pizza with side salad, chili or soup with bread and side, Meals that won't need additional dishes for toppings/garnishes/ingredients for assembling the meal or use of multiple crock pots etc.

- What you make for the meal is decided by you/your group. **RMHC does not fund the Happy Meal Program. All food is to be purchased by you/your group.**
- On average, you should plan to serve **Mon.–Thurs. 35 guests / Fri. - Sun. 25 guests** for dinner, but please note that we cannot guarantee a specific number of participants due to the unpredictable nature of families schedules.
 - ◇ Main entrée and side dishes to be included in the meal.
 - ◇ You do not need to include beverages. Desserts are not necessary but appreciated.

Your Volunteer Group

- You can have anywhere between 1 - 12 people in your group to prepare the meal. 12 is the limit.
- Children under the age of 18 are welcome when at least one guardian or group advisor (aka troop leader, teacher, etc.) is present and leading the individual or group.

Day Of Your Meal

- Food preparation may begin as early as 3pm (unless other arrangements have been made prior with House Director). Your arrival depends on how long you think it will take you/your group to prepare for **dinner to be served by approximately 6pm.**
- If any food would need to be in the oven or a crock pot for the day, with prior arrangement, you may come in as early as 9am to get it started and leave it until you come back in the afternoon.
- You may drop off food to be refrigerated or stored for your dinner 1 day prior if needed.
- To unload groceries, you may pull into the surface parking lot and come in to request a cart from the reception desk. Once unloaded and items are in the kitchen, you can find 2 hour on-street parking. **We would like to limit the amount of volunteer vehicles in our parking lot as possible since we utilize the lot for families, in-house volunteers and staff parking.** If on-street parking is not available, you may park on our surface lot, but please limit the amount of volunteer vehicles during your duration at the House.

Preparing Your Meal

- All volunteers **must wash hands** before any food is handled and **wear the protective food handling gloves** provided. It is extremely important that every effort to prevent food borne illness and food contamination is taken to ensure that we are providing a safe environment for our families. Please make sure to repeatedly change gloves and wash hands throughout your visit.
- Though dishwashers are available, please hand wash larger kitchen items when possible with the exception of items used to prepare raw meat or other food that could contain and transfer salmonella etc.
- All stovetop saute and saucepans, as well as frying pans and stock pots need to be handwashed. They cannot go into the dishwasher.

Serving Your Meal

- Dinner should be set out for families to enjoy at approximately 6pm.
- Food can be set up buffet style on the kitchen islands. Please have appropriate serving utensils with the food items.
- Because families may come at different times to eat after 6pm, you do not need to stay to serve beyond setting it out. Our nightly in-house volunteers put away any leftovers after 7:30p

Clean-Up

- After dinner is set out and before you leave the House, all the kitchen items you used to make the dinner (pots, pans, cookie sheets, utensils etc.) need to be placed in the dishwashers or handwashed. See above in "Preparing your meal" guidelines.
- Wipe down kitchen with cleaning supplies provided.
- Speak with a House volunteer or staff person anytime during your visit if you are interested in a tour of the House. We would be happy to do so if we have enough house volunteers and staff available.

FAQ's

1. **Will I have to bring my own dishes, serving utensils, plates etc.?** No. The House is fully stocked with dishes, glasses, silverware and utensils.
2. **What kitchen supplies are available to me?** The meal kitchen is equipped with all items needed to prepare your meal such as, but not limited to, pots, pans, bowls, baking pans, knives, cooking utensils, cookie sheets, measuring cups/spoons, several crock pots, 2 Nescos, 2 electric griddles, 2 ovens with induction top cooking, outdoor 5 burner gas grill (**gas grill can only be used April-October**).
3. **Does the House have salt, pepper, spices or other pantry items we can use?** Yes. We have many dried spices, but not always ones you may need as they are donated by previous groups. You can contact the House to do a pantry check. Salt/pepper, cooking oil will always be available to you along with flour, sugar, baking soda/powder. Other items to ask about before you bring them are salad dressings and condiments.
4. **Can we partially prepare meals at home to help speed up preparation, like cut up veggies, marinate food etc.?** No. Any preparation of food must be done at the Ronald McDonald House.
5. **Can we bring in wine or alcohol to enjoy while cooking or cook with alcohol?** No. Alcohol is not permitted in the House, for consumption of cooking, as part of RMHC House Policies.
6. **Can I take photos at the House?** You are welcome to take photos of your group members while at the House, however, taking photos with or of families is not permitted.

In the unfortunate event that you will be unable to provide your scheduled meal, please contact Tara Hensley—House Director at thensley@rmhcmadison.org or 608.232.4671 as far in advance as possible.