

Religious Diets - Is Halal Kosher?

By Barbara Wakeen, MA, RD, LD



Recently I was asked to prepare a presentation on Halal and Kosher dietary laws to a non-corrections audience including sharing how we address these dietary needs in Corrections. In doing this research, I learned many details of the dietary laws of Islam and Judaism and realized how simplified some of our procedures are to acknowledge

these dietary restrictions.

In many of our institutions we honor these dietary laws simply by offering a pork-free menu which usually reflects the meats and gelatin. This lumps both diet acknowledgments into one means to accommodate the restrictions. (Judaism also restricts shellfish, which usually isn't a problem in our environment.) For those institutions that offer a more defined religious diet program, we provide a variety of options:

- Common Fare menu - multiple versions of this exist
- Certified Food Menu
- Vegetarian Menu
- Vegan Menu
- Meat-free alternate entrees
- Pork-free alternate entrees
- Kosher meals - pre-packaged frozen or shelf stable
- Halal meals - pre-packaged shelf stable

There are more differences than those we commonly recognize between Halal and Kosher. They do have some commonalities, but recognizably more differences.

Halal and Kosher Commonalities

- Kosher is similar in meaning to Halal in the context of food only. Halal also refers to the lawful way of life.
- No pork consumption.
- Certification and processing must be authenticated to be labeled Halal or Kosher. Slaughtering process is done by hand with a sharp knife in a specified manner by someone specifically trained to slaughter.

Halal and Kosher Differences

Halal

- Islam prohibits all intoxicants, including alcohols, liquors and wines for drink and as any additive, preservative, etc.
- Gelatin from swine is 'haram' or prohibited; hence, we serve pork-free gelatin. Gelatin is also used in preparation of baked goods, ice cream, yogurt and jellies. If truly serving a Halal menu, any products containing gelatin must be from a pork-free or vegetarian source.
- Muslims must pronounce the name of ALLAH (God) on all animals while slaughtering.
- Fast during Ramadan between sunrise and sunset.

Kosher

- Judaism regards alcohol and wines as Kosher.
- Gelatin is Kosher regardless of the source; therefore, gelatin containing pork is OK.
- Kosher practice does not require the name of God to be pronounced on the animals while slaughtering.
- Kosher doesn't consume meat and dairy in same meal. There is a waiting period to consume dairy after meat and special procedure to consume meat after dairy.
- Kosher uses separate eating and preparation utensils and surfaces for meat and dairy consumption.
- Kosher doesn't allow shellfish.
- Laws apply always (no fasting as with Ramadan)
- There are added Passover restrictions. Foods that are Kosher for Passover exclude certain grain products, by-products or derivatives, or equipment used with the following grains, e.g., wheat - all classes, barley, spelt, rye, oats, legumes & rice.

Note: Legumes - include soybeans, lecithin, peas, beans and corn syrup.

So, back to the original question 'Is Halal Kosher?'. The simple answer is no for all of the above reasons, but we all do the best we can to accommodate based on our governing agency requirements.

Continued

Queries of the Quarter

- Minimum qualifications required for a position of Adult Corrections Cook
- Formula corrections dietitians use for calculating the needs of an individual offender
- Jail standards for menu planning
- Calories provided to females
- Corrections RD salary ranges

For discussion on any of these topics, please email me directly at bwakeen@neo.rr.com.

To some these are new topics, and to many, these are part of our daily operations. This indicates newcomers to 'the corrections world' and a wealth of expertise to share. Many thanks to all who have contributed to these discussions!

Past Dietitians Corner articles may be viewed on the ACFSA web site - www.acfsa.org.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you would like to be added to the Dietitians in Corrections networking EML, please email me directly at bwakeen@neo.rr.com. This is an informal discussion group and your name/email address will be listed in each email sent to the group.

If you are interested in joining the CD-HCF Corrections Sub-unit, contact me directly at bwakeen@neo.rr.com. ADA membership and CD-HCF membership are required to participate. If you are already a member and want to subscribe the Corrections Sub-unit EML or be listed in the directory, visit the CD-HCF web site at www.cdacf.org/subunits

MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCCHC Spring Conference

Updates in Correctional Health Care
April 8-11, 2006 | Las Vegas, Nevada
www.ncchc.org

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