



CATERING OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS IN SCHOOL CANTEENS

András J. Tóth<sup>1,2</sup>, Anikó Kovács<sup>1</sup>, Anna Dunay<sup>2✉</sup>, Csaba Bálint Illés<sup>2</sup>, Orsolya Fehér<sup>3</sup>, András Bittsánszky<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*InDeRe Institute for Food System Research and Innovation Nonprofit Ltd, Fehérvári út 132-144, H-1116 Budapest, Hungary*

<sup>2</sup>*Institute of Business Economics, Leadership and Management, Szent István University, Páter K. u. 1, H-2100 Gödöllő, Hungary*

<sup>3</sup>*Faculty of Food Science, Szent István University, Villányi út 29-43, H-1118 Budapest, Hungary*  
✉ [dunay.anna@gtk.szie.hu](mailto:dunay.anna@gtk.szie.hu)

<https://doi.org/10.34302/crpjfst/2021.13.2.8>

**Article history:**

Received,  
20 April 2020  
Accepted,  
22 March 2021

**Keywords:**

*Allergen management;*  
*Dietary restrictions;*  
*Public catering;*  
*School food*

**ABSTRACT**

The occurrence of diagnosed food intolerances and food allergies shows an increasing trend worldwide and the most affected age group is schoolchildren. School catering services are not always prepared for fulfilling the strict requirements of special diets. The main goal of the paper is to summarize the main food intolerances, allergies and diets and to show the situation of dietary food based on an empirical research representing 44 secondary schools in Hungary, where the existence of special diets, the number of consumers with special dietary needs and the appropriateness of conditions were analyzed. 4.3% of children of the sample required for special diets, but in 20% of all cases, diets were requested without appropriate documents. Only 3 kitchens complied fully the conditions of special dietary needs, an important problem was non-appropriate labelling of meals and cross-contamination. The increasing need for special diets generates additional tasks and responsibilities for school kitchens and food providers by providing special technologies, processes and conditions required for preparing dietary meals, and present research findings call attention for these requirements. In the future stage of the research the role of technical background and the knowledge of employees related to the special diets are to be explored.