Celebrating Birthdays with Limited Diets / No FOOD

[Image of a birthday cake and a baby]

Apfed
American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders
We all know how important birthday celebrations are to children – and to us as parents. We want to make the day special, something they will always remember. However when your child’s diet is limited, celebrations can be challenging.

Food is only one aspect of a birthday celebration. Think back to your own childhood birthday parties. Of the ones you remember, what specifically do you recall? It is likely you remember where was your party held, who was there, and the presents you opened. It is less likely that you remember the foods that were served.

Shift the focus of your child’s birthday to fun activities, rather than food. One mom, whose child was elemental formula only, recently told us that when her son’s birthday rolled around each year, it was the talk of their neighborhood. Little friends couldn’t wait to see what they would do each year, anticipating a “non-traditional” birthday party. Afterward, kids were asking their own parents to skip the cake and do something cool like their friend had.

Your child’s birthday celebration is what YOU make it!

Look at it as a way to use your creativity and put together a great party that others will be talking about for a long time!
The sky is the limit when planning a child’s Birthday party.

- Involve your child in the planning of the party. What theme they would like? Ideas for activities? Allowing them the opportunity to help plan the party will make it more meaningful.

- Plan the party during a time that is not normally associated with eating, such as mid-morning, or mid-afternoon.

- Plan activities to keep the guests busy during the party. Host the party at a local attraction, such as a skating rink, bowling alley, paintball field, movie theater, etc. If hosting the party at your home, plan activities such as treasure hunts, water slides in summer, snowman building contests in winter. Think of ideas no one else has done, and make the party a fun experience!
Celebrating Without Food

You may consider having a non-edible birthday cake that corresponds with the theme of your party. Some ideas:

- Provide craft materials, and have the guests create a special and unique cake for the birthday child.

- Make a “cake” out of hat boxes, and allow the birthday child to “open” his/her cake to find presents in each of the boxes.

- Make a “paper cake”, where each slice is an individual box and contains a special gift for the guests.

- While the guests are doing other activities, use the gifts they brought to build a birthday cake.
Paper Cake, make with slices, decorated with toys. Each “slice” holds prizes for guests.

Cake made with Play Doh®

Hat oxes of varying sizes, covered with themed wrapping paper, and decorated. Each box contained presents for the birthday child.
Celebrating with Safe Foods

Even with only a few safe foods, you can create a neat experience for the birthday child and their guest.

- Use your child’s safe food to come up with a neat “cake”. For example, if your child can tolerate apples, build a layer cake using apples held together with toothpicks, and insert a candle in the top apple. Allow each guest to enjoy an apple from the “cake”.

- Use sugar cubes to make the shape of a cake that corresponds with the party theme. Kitchen bowls and pans make a great base.

- Consider serving sno-cones with safe flavors or cotton candy.

- Make a Dum Dums® cake!
Plastic bowls were used for the base of this cake, with sugar cubes stacked along the outside and decorated with Dum Dums® and paper crafts.
Remember that F-O-O-D does not spell F-U-N!

Making your child’s birthday party one to remember is easy if you step back and look at what is really important.

Food at a party is not important, but having a FUN party and celebrating with friends is!

Use the challenge to create birthday memories that your child, as well as the guests, will always remember!
APFED is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to patients and their families coping with eosinophilic disorders. APFED strives to expand education, create awareness and fund research while promoting advocacy among its members.

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