



Keeping families close®

Meal Preparation Guidelines

Thank you for volunteering to prepare a meal for the families staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit! Many of our families do not have the time or energy to prepare a healthy meal for themselves, as they spend most of their time at the hospital with their child.

We appreciate your desire to make life easier for our families and this guide will help you use your time as productively as possible.

Scheduling a Volunteer Opportunity

- To schedule a volunteer opportunity, call our front desk between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. at (313) 745-5909 or email Nicky Bates at nbates@rmhc-detroit.org.. Our front desk staff will give you some available dates based off your time and date preferences. In general, we have the following time slots:
 - **Weekday Breakfast Prep** - Ideal for corporate groups. Prepare breakfast foods that can be eaten grab-and-go style the next morning when families leave for the hospital bright and early
 - Monday through Friday, 9 - 10 a.m. arrival
 - **Weekend Brunch** - Hot meal, usually served buffet style
 - Served between 10 and 11 am, you can arrive any time after 9 a.m.
 - **Weekday and Weekend Dinner** - Usually served buffet style
 - 7 days a week, served at 6 p.m., you can arrive at any time in the afternoon to begin preparing
- **Please limit your group to no more than 10 people.** This is the ideal size for preparing food efficiently in our kitchen.

Please note that because our House is a 5 minute shuttle ride from the hospital, many families do not return to the House until late in the evening and may not be in the kitchen during these meal times. Any leftovers will be put in our House fridge and consumed the next day (or in the middle of the night!)

Before You Arrive

- **If you're making dinner or a weekend brunch, please plan and purchase a complete meal,** including an entree, sides, drinks, and dessert. Keep in mind that although spaghetti and a tossed salad are easy to prepare, our families would love to try something new, so feel free to branch out or make your family's favorite dish!
- **If you're preparing breakfast on a weekday, please plan and purchase meals that can be taken on-the-go.** This could be pre-rolled breakfast burritos, egg muffins, or anything that can be heated up quickly and taken to the hospital.
- **For the health and safety of our families,** meals must be prepared in the House kitchen. It is stocked with the normal pots, pans, serving dishes and utensils available in a home kitchen. If you need a specialty item, please call to make sure we have it or bring your own.



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At the House

- **Pull up to the black awning** and unload your supplies into our elevator lobby. Our front desk volunteer will direct you to the kitchen and give you instructions for the free and secure parking lot next to our building.
- **If you would like a tour of the House**, please ask the front desk staff! We love to show off our home.
- **If you can't find a kitchen item or utensil**, the front desk staff usually knows where it is! All of our cupboards are labeled.

Serving Your Meal

Weekends - all meals

Weekdays - dinner only

- **The easiest way to serve your meal** is buffet style along the large kitchen island counter so people can help themselves! Please check the House refrigerators for open condiments and use those first!
- **When you're ready to serve**, nominate someone from your group to go to the front desk and make an announcement on our in-house loudspeaker.
- **While families are enjoying their meal**, we encourage you to talk to them! A friendly face and a warm hello is just as welcome as the meal you've prepared.

Clean Up

- **Clean up can begin** after the food has been out for 45 minutes (or for prepared breakfasts, as soon as you've finished preparing them!) Leftovers can be packaged in storage bags and containers, labeled, and put in one of the refrigerators labeled "House". Anything not needing refrigeration can be covered and left on the counter.
- **Please wash all pots, pans, and utensils.** Wipe tables, counters, and the stove. Empty the trash if necessary and sweep the kitchen floor. Staff members can help you find anything you need.



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Frequently Asked Questions

We have a group larger than 8. How can we prepare a meal?

You could choose more than one date or two meals on one day and break up into smaller groups! We know that this is a challenge for groups, but we find that having too many people in the kitchen can be intimidating to our families.

We signed up for a date but now we can't come. What should we do?

Give us a call at (313) 745-5909 as soon as you can so we can reschedule you and provide alternate meal plans for our families.

If preparing a meal isn't right for our group, what are other ways we can help?

We have a wishlist of items we need donated and we always need volunteers for events that help us raise money for Ronald McDonald House Charities Detroit! We also always have cleaning projects that we need help with - there are lots of ways to help! Call Nicky at (313) 966-9084 and we will find something that works for your group!

Why weren't there more people when we served our meal?

Most parents want to spend as much time as they can with their hospitalized child. They usually come back to the House when their child is asleep or otherwise occupied. Being able to eat a home cooked meal - even if it's leftovers at 2 a.m. - helps relieve some of the stress our families are feeling.

What equipment is in the kitchen?

We have two stoves, four microwaves, two sinks, and two dishwashers. We have all of the cooking dishes, serving dishes, utensils, and spices you would find in most kitchens. If there is something specific you need, feel free to call and we can see if we have it!

Can we bring our children to play with the kids in the House?

The Ronald McDonald House is for families with ill and injured children who are usually hospitalized for a long period of time. We don't often have kids in the House, and when we do, we must be very careful of germs and infections. We ask that all volunteers be over the age of 14. If you have any questions please give us a call!

Does preparing a meal really help families?

YES! It does! The families who stay with us are under a lot of stress and being in an environment that is similar to home helps relieve some of that stress. There's nothing like coming home to a homemade meal after a long day!