

MIT Parents Virtual Chat with MIT Dining
Thursday, August 15, 2013
12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m. (EST)

(Q) My son signed up for the 19 meal plan. Does the meal plan decision happen on a semester by semester basis or is he now committed for the entire year to 19 meals? Also, can he eat anywhere on campus, and are there "dining dollars" that allow him to eat in local restaurants?

(A) Everyone that has a meal plan will automatically be re-enrolled with the same meal plan. The change period for the Spring Semester runs from Thursday, January 2nd through Thursday, February 13th, 2014. Voluntary participants may change or cancel during this time. It also depends on which residence hall he resides in.

(Q) I understand that there is free food during orientation for students, just in case they can't find any (lol) is there any dining halls open if needed?

(A) Dinner will be provided to the entire freshman class on Monday August 26, and Friday August 30. On Tuesday August 27, all incoming freshman will eat in the residence they reside in. This is to foster the beginning of community within the freshman class in their individual buildings. Individuals living in a residential dining facility will eat through the dining halls. Individuals living in a FSILG or Cook-For-Yourself facilities will have dinner provided to them from the housemaster of that location. Wednesday August 28th, and Thursday August 29, dinner will be provided through orientation activities.

(Q) My son has food allergies. Will they have something in the menu every day for kids with allergies?

(A) The meal plan is especially useful for those with special dietary needs: athletes, vegans, vegetarians, those with food allergies, and those who keep kosher and halal. We have specific options at every meal for vegans and vegetarians, and dedicated facilities and ingredients for kosher and halal meals. Bon Appétit has been excellent in providing information and options for individuals with specific dietary needs. We encourage any student with special dietary needs to contact the General Manager, Lauren Patterson at Lauren.Patterson@cafebonappetit.com. Bon Appétit has navigated through very challenging situations. It is important that students reach out to Bon Appétit management to discuss their specific needs. Additionally, students should introduce themselves to the Front of the House Manager, and the Chef Manager of the location they typically eat. The managers can help point out dishes to stay away from, or dishes that are fine for them to eat.

(Q) You mentioned that the meal plan depends on where my son lives. He is in Burton Connor. Which I understand is a cook for yourself dorm. Can you please explain what the impact of that is on the meal plan choice?

(A) Since your son is in Burton Conner, he would be a voluntary member. He would be able to reduce the plan from the Full 19. The minimum requirement for him would be the Basic 14. More detailed information on the plans can be found at <http://dining.mit.edu/meal-plans/options>.

(Q) My son will be in MacGregor Hall and is currently enrolled in 14 meal plan. Can he eat anywhere on campus with his dining dollars especially lunch? If he is allowed to use his dining dollars anywhere on campus I will upgrade him to 19 meal plan.

(A) The TechCASH program can be used in any of our dining venues. However, the meal plan cannot be used in any other location besides the 5 residential dining halls

(Q) Is the menu for the month available online?

(A) Bon Appétit, posts weekly menus at this site <http://mit.cafebonappetit.com/> Right now, you won't see anything listed in the menus as all our house dining locations are closed. We are also in the process of developing a dining app that will be found on the MIT app. This will also allow students to pull menus from their smartphone.

(Q) Which dining halls are open for lunch?

(A) The Howard Dining Hall in Maseeh, W1, is the only location that serves lunch. This location serves lunch from 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

(Q) In one dorm, freshmen must sign up for the package 19 meals a week. How long is that binding?

(A) At this time, we do not anticipate a change in this structure.

(Q) If the student is sick, can his/her friend bring his meal from dining hall? What is the procedure?

(A) Yes a friend can pick up a meal for the sick student. Please see <http://dining.mit.edu/meal-plans/sick-tray> for more detail on this program.

(Q) When they eat at the Student Center, they can't use their Meal Plan?

(A) Meal plans can only be used in the five dining halls. They can use TechCASH or pay with cash or credit if they want to eat at the Student Center.

(Q) If he has food allergies does he have the choice to work with the chef to come up with a menu or does he only have to take what is offered in the meal that day

(A) In severe cases, Bon Appétit will do special meals. It is really important for your student to reach out to the managers to discuss options. When they know there is an issue they will work with the student.

(Q) What is the cost per semester for 19 meal package in Maseeh?

(A) The semester cost for the Full 19 is \$2,387

(Q) Is dining hall in McCormick open all 7 days? or from Sun to Thursday?

(A) You can see the hours for each dining hall here: <http://mit.cafebonappetit.com/>

(Q) Can students pick up as many bagged meals as they like, so that they can eat in class or their rooms while doing homework?

(A) You are correct. There are no limits to the number of bagged meals students can get. Students would have to fill out the form located at <http://mit.cafebonappetit.com/carry-out-meals/>

You can see the McCormick hours (and other dining hall hours) here: <http://mit.cafebonappetit.com/>

(Q) In Tech Cash, there is "Student Dining Dollars" and "Student TechCash". Can dining be paid from the Student Techcash account if the Dining Dollars account is \$0?

(A) The short answer is yes. This might be a good question to ask the TechCASH office.

(Q) Are there some veggie items in Howard dining in Maseeh? Are bagged meals vegetarians too?

(A) All of our dining halls offer a wide range of vegetarian and vegan options at every meal period. Students would be able to request a vegetarian sandwich for the carry out program.

(Q) Can you please repeat what you said about orientation food provided?

(A) Dinner will be provided to the entire freshman class on Monday August 26, and Friday August 30. On Tuesday August 27, all incoming freshman will eat in the residence they reside in. This is to foster the beginning of community within the freshman class in their individual buildings. Individuals living in a residential dining facility will eat through the dining halls. Individuals living in a FSILG or Cook-For-Yourself facilities will have dinner provided to them from the housemaster of that location. Dining halls will be open Monday, August 26, Tuesday August 27, and Friday August 30.

(Q) Is their additional cost for dining if student wants to attend IAP in Jan?

(A) There would be an additional cost but participation in the program is not required. This is also the same for the summer.

(Q) So does that mean that eating outside the five residential dining halls will be at extra cost?

(A) You are correct. Our retail venues are not part of the residential meal plan program.

(Q) Will TechCash be activated by the time they are on campus so that they can use it for eating on the days when the dining halls are not open, or will they need to go to local restaurants?

(A) If your student is signed up for TechCASH, they will be able to use it when they arrive.

(Q) Could my son have breakfast in one residence dining hall and lunch in another even if he resides in Maseeh?

(A) Yes. The only exception would be that The Howard Dining Hall in Maseeh is the only dining hall that serves lunch. Any meal plan holder can go to any of the 5 residential dining facilities.

(Q) What is available, if anything, for the students on Wednesday August 28 and Thursday August 29 if the dining halls are available only on Monday, August 26, Tuesday August 27, and Friday August 30?

(A) Many of the orientation activities for incoming freshman do have food available. These orders are set up with the event organizer, and unfortunately, we do not have comprehensive list of what food will be provided outside the realm of the Residential Dining Meal Plan. <http://dining.mit.edu/venues-menus/retaildining> shows the open venues on campus.

(Q) Can you answer questions about the Cook-for-yourself communities? Specifically MacGregor. Is there enough fridge space for everyone? How are the provided cookware? Do people bring their own cookware? etc.

(A) Each Cook-for-yourself community runs the program differently. Some houses do have basic pots and pans available for use, and some do not. I am not familiar with the specific procedures at MacGregor. I have not heard that any CFYS community does not have enough refrigeration space.

(Q) This is continuation of orientation period: is dining hall open on Wed. and Thursday, that is August 28 and 29?

(A) No the dining halls are not open those days. The orientation events and/or Housemasters are providing meals.

(Q) If not on a dining plan, can a student use cash, debit, or credit card to pay for a meal in a dining hall? Or, only techcash?

(A) Students can use cash or TechCASH to pay for dining hall meals if they don't have a meal plan.

(Q) When a student is used to three meals per day, how do they adjust to the 14 meal plan? Do they skip breakfast for example, or eat lunch at a food truck? I know that they do adjust and that everyone is different; I'm just looking for an answer of directionally how do they generally choose?

(A) I have not heard any feedback that this has been an issue for students. It really does depend on the student's class schedule, and the times that they have open to eat. Many students who do not have a lunch option with the meal plan can either make their own lunch, or use one of our retail facilities across campus.

(Q) My son will be there on the 24th of August. Will he have to purchase meals till the Monday the 26th?

(A) It depends on what activity they are involved in. (FPOP, International Students, Athletics). They should plan to be ready to pay for their own meals, just in case. There will be other students around and often the students are meeting each other for the first time and going to get meals together.

(Q) No credit or debit cards to pay for dining hall meals?

(A) Students can use cash or TechCASH if they don't have a dining plan.

(Q) If a student finds that they aren't using the 19 meals is there a cut off time to change to the 14 basic or are they locked in to it until next semester?

(A) Our change period for the fall semester is now through August 18. After the 18th they will be locked in until the semester break.

(Q) If the students didn't use their 19 meals in one semester, can they carry forward to next semester?

A) Our meals reset every week. If the meals are not used in the week, they are lost. The week begins with Sunday Breakfast and ends with Dinner on Saturday.

(Q) On weekends what is the schedule brunch and dinner?

(A) You can see the dining hall schedules listed here: <http://mit.cafebonappetit.com/>

RESOURCES

Questions? If you have any additional questions, you may email foodstuff@mit.edu and we will answer your question.

Websites

- MIT Dining: <http://dining.mit.edu/>
- MIT Bon Appétit: <http://mit.cafebonappetit.com/>
- MIT TechCASH: <http://techcash.mit.edu/>