



# Be a **Food Allergy Friend**

Do you know someone who has food allergies? With as many as 15 million people living with food allergies (or 1 in 25 Americans), chances are you do. Have you ever wondered what you could do when eating with someone who has food allergies to help them stay safe?



### Dining Out

The key to dining out with friends is to plan ahead. Ask them if they have preferred restaurants. Most restaurants now regularly accommodate customers with food allergies. If you are eating at a buffet-style facility, consider people with food allergies who may come after you. Don't use the same serving utensils for multiple food items. If you see someone else making a mess, say something to your server.



### Dining at Your Home

If you are inviting someone to your house, ask if they have any food allergies or dietary preferences. Your guest with food allergies will know their condition better than you, so when in doubt just ask them for help. Be sure to check ingredient labels carefully for the allergen(s) and confirm with your friend how foods are being cooked. If you are hosting a child with food allergies, don't feel offended if their parents decide to bring their own food. If you are reheating anything, be sure the food is reheated in its own sealed container or according to the parent's instructions.



### Dining at Their House

Have you been invited to dine with someone who has food allergies at their home? Plan ahead and ask about what you can bring over. Let them know how you are preparing foods and the exact ingredients and brands used. Wine or flowers are always a great alternative if your host politely declines your offer.

Written by Lily Leung, MPH, RDN

#### RESOURCES:

1. Food Allergy Facts and Statistics for the U.S.: <https://www.foodallergy.org/file/facts-stats.pdf>
2. FARE Dining Out Guide: <https://www.foodallergy.org/managing-food-allergies/dining-out>
3. Be a PAL: <https://www.foodallergy.org/be-a-pal>