

HOSTING AN ALLERGY-FRIENDLY EVENT

It can seem intimidating to host a party if you know that the people attending have food allergies. This guide can help you plan a party where everyone can be included safely.

COMMON ALLERGENS

These are the most common food allergens:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Crustacean/Shellfish
- Tree nuts*
- Peanuts*
- Wheat (and Gluten)
- Soybeans
- Sesame

*Consider making your whole event nut-free because many people with nut allergies are sensitive enough that they can react to being in the vicinity of nuts.

Some of these are easier to avoid than others, and it helps to know the people who are attending your event. If you aren't sure what allergens to avoid, some companies make allergen-friendly snacks that are free of all major allergens.

IF YOU ARE NEW TO COOKING WITH FOOD ALLERGIES, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS THAT CAN MAKE IT EASIER:

FIND OUT IF ANY OF YOUR GUESTS HAVE FOOD ALLERGIES.

Trying to avoid one or two of these allergies is easier than avoiding all of them, so asking those attending to let you know if they have allergies can help you feel confident and help them feel more comfortable.

READ THE LABELS OF EVERYTHING. MANY FOODS THAT MAY SEEM SAFE AT FIRST GLANCE MAY ACTUALLY CONTAIN ALLERGENS.

Read the full ingredient list and check the end of the list for the bold writing. Many companies will include the major allergens in a list at the end of the ingredients to make the process easier. Also, save packaging in case someone with an allergy needs to read the label of something.

INGREDIENTS: UNBLEACHED ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMINE MONONITRATE (VITAMIN B1), RIBOFLAVIN (VITAMIN B2), FOLIC ACID), SUGAR, PALM OIL, SOYBEAN AND/OR CANOLA OIL, COCOA (PROCESSED WITH ALKALI), HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, LEAVENING (BAKING SODA AND/OR CALCIUM PHOSPHATE, SALT, POTASSIUM LECITHIN, CHOCOLATE, ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR).
CONTAINS: WHEAT, SOY.

CONSIDER HOW YOU ARE SERVING AND PREPARING THE FOOD.

Make sure that each item has its own serving utensils to prevent cross-contamination. For example, if you are baking cookies, bake the allergen-free cookies first to prevent them from picking up allergens from the pan. If you buy prepackaged items that are certified allergen-free, leave them sealed in the original package. This can prevent cross-contamination and help people feel safer eating what you are serving.

LOOK FOR A RESTAURANT'S ALLERGEN GUIDE.

If you are ordering catering, most places will have some sort of an allergen guide on their website that shows which of the major allergens are found in each food item.

LABEL ITEMS THAT ARE ALLERGEN-FREE.

Making a small sign to indicate if a dish is made in a way that it is gluten-free, dairy-free, etc will make it easier for people to find something they can eat.

EVERYONE DOESN'T NEED TO BE ABLE TO EAT EVERYTHING.

Everything at your party doesn't have to be completely allergen-free. Making sure that there is something that everyone can eat will make them feel included.

IF IN DOUBT, GOOGLE IT.

There are many websites and apps that have information about specific allergens.

DON'T OVERTHINK IT.

We've included lots of suggestions and ready-made items at the end of this document. If you have any specific questions about a guest's ability to eat something, just ask them!

DON'T BE OFFENDED IF SOMEONE BRINGS THEIR OWN FOOD.

Some people have severe or uncommon allergies and feel safer bringing food that they have prepared themselves. If they choose to bring their own food, it just means that they want to participate with you while prioritizing their health.

HERE ARE SOME ITEMS THAT ARE A GOOD PLACE TO START IF YOU ARE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO SERVE AT YOUR GATHERING. (THERE ARE LINKS TO SPECIFIC FOOD ITEMS)

FOOD IDEAS THAT ARE NATURALLY FREE OF MANY ALLERGENS: (SOY IS HIDDEN IN MANY CONDIMENTS AND DRESSINGS, SO READ CAREFULLY IF YOU ARE TRYING TO AVOID THAT)

- Veggie tray (You can find lots of dairy-free ranch options if you need that)
- Fruit tray
- Chips or gluten-free pretzels and dip
 - Salsa
 - Hummus
 - Guacamole
- Salads
- Popcorn
- Popsicles
- Meat trays

THERE ARE ALSO MANY EASY SUBSTITUTIONS FOR COMMON ITEMS THAT CAN MAKE YOUR RECIPES MORE ALLERGEN FRIENDLY.

- Pretzels
- Crackers
- Pasta
- Gluten free flour (replace all-purpose flour in recipes)
- Graham Crackers
- Chocolate bars

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS OF READY-MADE ITEMS THAT MAY MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

- Cookie dough
- Cookies
- Ice cream
- Enjoy Life products (snacks, cookies, etc)
- Hamburger buns

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

FOOD ALLERGIES: FDA

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/food-allergies#:~:text=of%20imported%20products.,Major%20Food%20Allergens,peanuts%2C%20wheat%2C%20and%20soybeans.>

A DINNER PARTY HOST'S GUIDE TO FOOD ALLERGIES - ANCIENT HARVEST

<https://ancientharvest.com/dinner-party-hosts-guide-food-allergies/>

PARTY PROBLEM SOLVED - STYLISH SPOON

<https://www.stylishspoon.com/blogs/blog/party-problem-solved-hosting-guests-with-food-allergies>

FOOD ALLERGY FRIENDLY PARTIES

<https://aneasyjourney.com/food-allergy-friendly-parties/>