



Student Checklist

Congratulations! If you are reading this checklist, you have successfully been admitted to college!

This is your time to fly and enjoy college while safely and effectively managing your food allergies. This checklist can help you choose which questions to ask and determine if your chosen college will work for your needs.

Accommodations

Contact the Disabilities Office or Academic Support Office immediately.

- o **NOTE:** Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many administrative offices are operating with limited staff and hours. In addition, some schools close for a break during July. Do not wait until the last minute to contact your school.
- o Many college staff will prefer to speak directly to you instead of your parent/caregiver. If you are not entirely comfortable with this, talk with your parents or caregivers about ways you can handle this together.
 - If you are going to make a phone call, can your parent/caregiver be in the room or join the call in other ways? Do you want them to join your call, or would you rather talk it through with them ahead of time and handle the call on your own?

- If you are going to send emails, do you want to review them with your parent or caregiver before sending?

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- o Create a checklist of questions to help you learn how the college handles food allergies.
 - Do not forget to include asthma and any other related conditions requiring accommodations in discussions.
 - **This moment is about you** gathering enough information so you can feel comfortable saying yes to this school!
 - o Confirm the name and contact information of the person who will help secure your accommodations.
 - If you are unsure whom to contact, your admissions officer is an excellent place to start.
 - o Ask whether accommodations will be managed by one person who will coordinate with the Housing and Dining Services departments, or if you need to speak directly to each department head from Dining Services and Housing.

Ask what information is needed to establish accommodations for your food allergy and other needs.

- o Confirm due dates for all forms that verify your need for accommodations.
- o Is a letter needed from your board-certified allergist to confirm your food allergy diagnosis? Or is there a form to be completed by your doctor?

- o Does your board-certified allergist need to submit a separate form or document outlining the accommodation requests?

- o Do you need to submit results from a current physical or medical appointment?

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Dining Services

❑ **Is there an established protocol for managing food allergies on campus?** If so, take a closer look at these policies and procedures and confirm with the department head that these practices will be in place when you arrive on campus.

o Ask for details:

- How will you request and receive safe meals?

- Which eateries on campus will be safe for you to enjoy?

- What is the name of the company managing the food service? Is it Aramark, Sodexo, Bon Appetit, or do they handle their own food service? The food service companies mentioned above offer specific protocols for food allergen management nationwide.

- Have the college food service staff received advanced food allergen management training from accredited sources such as AllerTrain™? **NOTE: MenuTrinfo® partnered with FAACT** to offer AllerTrain's expert food allergy training and food service protocols.

- Does the food service have a policy in place for ordering allergen-safe ingredients? Are they able to read labels or confirm ingredient cross-contact risk from the manufacturer?

- Will these practices meet your needs?

- Confirm with the college what your responsibility is for securing safe meals.

- Confirm with the college what the school's responsibility is for serving safe meals.

❑ **Do you feel the college is handling food allergies well?** If not, talk to your parent or other adults to analyze the college protocols to determine if your needs can be met.

o Be honest with yourself. Will you take the time to ask about each meal, or do you prefer to grab and go?

o Each college handles food service differently. While one school may offer fresh, made-to-order meals, others will offer top 8 allergen-free stations.

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Housing

- ❑ Campuses offer a wide range of housing, but often freshmen are required to live in specific freshmen, honors, or athletic dorms. What are the freshmen dorm requirements?
 - Do you want a roommate or a medical single?
 - If you want a medical single, ask about the procedure for you to secure a single.
 - Speak with your board-certified allergist regarding rooming options to figure out which option may be best for you.
 - What paperwork and information are needed from your doctor to request a medical single and when is it due?

 - **NOTE:** Students should pay the price for standard housing when requesting a medical single. Under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is not permissible for a college or university to charge a surcharge for a necessary disability accommodation.
 - Ask how roommates are matched and how they share food allergies or special needs during the matching process?

 - Can you request a roommate who will honor your need for them to not bring your allergen into the room?

 - Ask if you can request a roommate who will be open to food allergy restrictions.
 - Learn what sizes and types of appliances are allowed in dorm rooms. Some colleges restrict the size or usage of mini-refrigerators and microwaves. Some allow electric kettles, while others limit any type of appliance.
- ❑ Visit the [Legal Considerations section](#) of this toolkit to learn about your rights at college to receive accommodations.

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Classrooms and Labs

- ❑ **Inform professors, teaching assistants, and other students about your food allergies.**
 - We know you are thinking ‘no way,’ so hear us out. After speaking with students who experienced an allergic reaction on campus, one common factor in their successful outcome was others’ assistance. This means campus staff and friends need to understand your allergies and know the location of your emergency epinephrine auto-injectors.
- ❑ **Ask if the Disabilities office informs each professor or teaching assistants about your accommodations.**
 - Decide if you will also share this information yourself with your professor via email, an in-person conversation, or allow the school to share this information.
 - Review the [How To Talk to Your Professors section](#) of this toolkit.
- ❑ **If you are taking a lab course, speak to your professor about your allergies. Some proteins used in science labs may contain allergens.**
 - After speaking with college professors, we learned they genuinely want to know this information! They want to keep their students safe.

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Medical Needs

☐ Up-to-Date Medical Details:

- Make an appointment ASAP with your board-certified allergist/doctor to ask questions. Schedule a food challenge or other necessary tests to ensure you are heading to college with the most current information about your food allergy.
- Ask your doctor for prescriptions for all medications needed for the upcoming school year. If prescriptions will need to be filled during the school year, talk with your parents/caregivers about whether to transfer those prescriptions to a pharmacy near campus.
- Ask your parents/caregivers if you will remain on their health insurance or accept the college's health insurance plan. Get an up-to-date insurance card. (Tip: Keep a front and back photo of the insurance card on your phone).

☐ Vaccinations:

- Prepare all vaccination records. Many colleges will not allow students to live on campus without specific vaccinations completed before arriving on campus.
- Inquire about what vaccinations are needed.
- **NOTE:** Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some colleges may require a Covid-10 vaccination. If so, what records does the college require?

☐ Ongoing Treatments:

- If you participate in OIT, SLIT, or other treatments that need to continue during college, speak to your doctor ASAP to establish how treatment will continue.
- Ask if your treatments can be managed through the campus' student health services department or if you need to find a local board-certified allergist.
- If you would like to establish a relationship with a local board-certified allergist, ask for recommendations from your doctor and ask your parent or caregiver to help you find a local provider. A local board-certified allergist may also want to review your current allergist's records so they are fully in the know about your medical history. This communication can occur before you move to college so that your local care team is well-informed and ready to go when you arrive.

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Emergency Services and Medical Care

☐ How does the college respond to medical emergencies?

- Ask about how the college would react to an anaphylactic emergency.
 - Who are the first responders? Campus Security? Local EMS?

• Who would you call to ask for help?

• Who can assist you with an allergic reaction in your dorm room, in the dining hall, in a classroom, or on campus?

• Does the campus stock unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors? _____

- Local Emergency Services:
 - o Is there a hospital within a reasonable driving distance or is the college located in a remote area?

 - o Will you have access to Emergency Services when off campus?

 - o If the college is in a remote area, do local EMS carry epinephrine? If not, speak to your doctor regarding how many emergency epinephrine auto-injectors you should always have on you. (Two is usually the minimum.)

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Civil Rights and Legal Considerations

- Visit the Legal Considerations section in this College Tool Kit to learn more about your legal rights and accommodations.
- The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, have determined that food allergies are a disability that must be accommodated by university and college food services and housing offices.
- Legal Documents
 - o Some families choose to establish a Power of Attorney and/or a Health Care Proxy. Please visit the [Legal Considerations section](#) of this toolkit for details.

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Managing Stress

- Even though you are feeling excited about your acceptance to college, these can also be stressful times. Seek out coping skills and support - we all need a boost every now and then.
 - o This checklist can feel overwhelming, but the good news is that the list helps you do all the hard work before you arrive on campus!
 - o Consider speaking with a therapist about skills for managing stress and anxiety while at college. These are normal feelings, and there are great tools available that will help you your entire life!
- To quell stress and anxiety related to your food allergies, make sure the people you spend time with in college know about your food allergies in detail. They will be able to help look out for you!
- Continue keeping a planner/agenda like you did in high school. This will help you stay organized and on task.
- College requires a lot of work. Do not lose yourself in that shuffle. Do at least one thing that you love every day, whether it's reading a book, going for a run, watching silly videos, or something else entirely!
- Check out this podcast featuring two current college students: [College Life with Food Allergies](#).
- If you feel stressed, check out this short FAACT article and free downloadable handout: ["How to Talk To Your Parents About Your Mental Health"](#).
- Another short and powerful article is ["Anxiety and Depression; When It's Time to Seek Help: Behavioral Health Issues and Food Allergies."](#)

- ❑ Visit the [Behavioral Health Resources section](#) of this toolkit for more tips on managing stress and maintaining mental health.

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