Food Allergies: Volunteer Guide

Why food allergies matter

A food allergy happens when someone's immune system reacts to certain foods. Even a very small amount of an allergen can make someone seriously unwell. For some people, an allergic reaction (called anaphylaxis) can be life-threatening.

At Everybody Eats, keeping our guests safe is everyone's responsibility. If a guest tells you they have a food allergy, always take it seriously and never guess whether a food is safe.

Common allergens

Our menus use PEAL (Plain English Allergen Labelling) markers to identify common allergens.

PEAL Marker	Allergen
E	Eggs
P	Peanuts (separate to nuts)
D	Dairy (Animal Milk)
S	Soy
SS	Sesame
L	Lupin*
G	Gluten-containing cereals (wheat, barley, rye, oats)
W	Wheat
F	Fish
C	Crustacea
M	Molluscs
SU	Sulphites
N	Nuts
N (name the nut)	Almonds, Brazil, Cashews, Hazelnuts, Macadamias, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts

*Lupin, peanut, and soy are cousin beans with similar proteins, which means if you are allergic to peanuts, your body might mistake lupin for a peanut and trigger a dangerous reaction.
Lupin is commonly found in gluten-free products, baked goods, pastas, and processed vegan or meat alternatives as a protein-rich flour or binder. It should be clearly labeled on the packaging.

Serving guests with food allergies

Follow these steps every time.

Before service

- Listen carefully as the chef explains the menu and points out any dishes containing common allergens.

At the table

- The menu on each table shows the allergens for every dish.
- During your introduction, ask every guest:
- "Does anyone have any food allergies or dietary allergies I should know about?"
- If someone has a food allergy:
- Tell the chef AND manager immediately.
- Ask exactly which menu items are safe and which are not.
- Never make assumptions.
- Explain clearly to the guest which dishes are safe for them and which they should avoid.

Taking the order

- Confirm the allergy again before taking their order.
- When giving the order to the chef, remind them of the guest's allergy.

Collecting the meal

- When collecting the plate from the pass, confirm with the chef that it is the correct allergy-safe meal.

Serving the meal

- When placing the food in front of the guest, confirm it is their allergy-safe meal.

If someone has an allergic reaction

Signs of a serious allergic reaction may include:

- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Swelling of the lips, tongue or throat
- Difficulty speaking or swallowing
- Dizziness or fainting
- Widespread hives or rash

What to do

1. **Tell the shift supervisor immediately.**
2. Stay with the guest and remain calm.
3. If the reaction is severe or the guest is having trouble breathing, call **111** immediately.
4. If the guest has an adrenaline (EpiPen) auto-injector and asks for assistance, help them access it if you are trained and it is safe to do so.
5. Keep the guest comfortable and continue to reassure them until emergency services arrive.
6. Never give food or drink to someone who is having a serious allergic reaction.

Remember: If you're ever unsure whether something is safe, **stop and ask the chef or supervisor. It is always better to check than to guess.**