

Special Dietary Needs

In order to ensure a safe and enjoyable dining experience Dining Services works to support students, faculty, staff and guests with special dietary needs. This includes those with medically restricted diets and those with food allergies and intolerances.

Dining Services is generally able to meet the needs of students requesting specialized meal plans so all students with special dietary needs are encouraged to work with dining services to make dining on campus enjoyable and safe. The process outlined below provides guidance for the steps to take to help ensure a pleasant dining experience. While Residential Life does not grant dining accommodations students who have one of the dietary reasons listed above *must* take the following steps in order to develop a plan for safe campus dining.

1. It is the responsibility of students to first register with [Disability Resources](#) in order to document their disability as described in this protocol.
2. Once this is done, students must contact the Director of University Nutrition. The Director of University Nutrition serves as the point of contact in Dining Services for students seeking accommodations or who have questions or concerns regarding nutrition or dietary needs.

Documentation of the need for a medically restricted diet for a diagnosed condition or a food allergy or intolerance must include the following:

- A letter from a licensed primary healthcare provider or specialty physician with relevant experience in treating the diagnosed condition and who has examined the student within the last year. The letter must outline the medical condition, allergy or intolerance; supporting medical history, physical exam, and diagnostic test results; and prescribed nutrition treatment.
- Letters written by healthcare providers who are family members of the student will not be accepted.
- Physical exam criteria and diagnostic test results to support the diagnosis of a food allergy include those recommended in the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (“NIAID”) [Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Food Allergy in the United States](#). Non-standardized and unproven procedures not accepted by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) will not be accepted as adequate documentation of a food allergy diagnosis. Unacceptable procedures or tests include, but are not limited to: cytotoxicity assays, mediator release assay, allergen specific IgG4, provocation neutralization, and electrodermal testing. Such tests are associated with a lack of evidence demonstrating validity and/or reliability in diagnosis of a food allergy, delay of appropriate therapy, or unnecessary dietary restrictions that could lead to nutritional deficiencies because of false positive results, and false negative results that could lead to dangerous consumption of an allergen.

- Self-diagnosis or parental diagnosis of food allergies or non-celiac gluten intolerance without medical corroboration, as described above, will not be accepted as valid documentation. Self-diagnosis of food allergies or gluten intolerance can lead to misdiagnosis and possible delay of treatment for another disorder as well as unnecessary dietary restriction that can compromise nutritional health.

Ensuring that Dining Services provides a safe and nourishing experience requires commitment from both the customer and Dining Services.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT

Register with [Disability Resources](#) and then schedule, and attend, an appointment with the Director of University Nutrition.

Provide appropriate documentation regarding medically restricted diets, food allergies or intolerances when requested.

Be knowledgeable and proficient in the management of individual's medical nutrition needs. The Director of University Nutrition is available to provide nutrition education on prescribed dietary treatment to students who have newly diagnosed conditions.

Proficiency in management of nutrition includes the following, with additional specifics presented for those with food allergies:

- Avoidance of foods which the student is allergic to, has an intolerance of, or any others which are unsafe for the condition.
- Recognition of symptoms of dietary nonadherence or, in the case of a food allergy, an allergic reaction.
- Knowledge of how and when to tell someone that the student may be having an allergy-related problem, including how to access emergency services.
- Knowledge of proper use of medications to treat a food allergy, if appropriate.
- Carrying epinephrine in the form of an EpiPen, if prescribed for treatment of an allergic reaction.
- Knowledge of the dangers of simultaneous consumption of alcohol and a known food allergen because of increased absorption of a food allergen with this combination.
- Consider providing education to the student's Resident Assistant, roommates, and friends about a food allergy, including how to seek help for an allergic reaction and any information on medications used to treat an allergic reaction.
- Read the menus and ingredient information that is available on the web or mobile app.
- When in campus dining locations, direct specific questions about ingredients or dietary needs to the chef or manager only.
- Avoid areas/foods known to be high risk for cross-contact if food allergies, celiac disease or gluten intolerance has been diagnosed. Examples include self-serve and made-to-order menu items, fried food, and items prepared in the campus bakery.

- Maintain communication with the Director of University Nutrition or Campus Chefs to keep Dining Services apprised of the student's needs so that modifications or adjustments can be made as needed.

RESPONSIBILITY OF DINING SERVICES

Actively engage with students in a collaborative process to establish a plan for safely meeting a student's needs for all special dietary needs.

Introduce any student actively engaged in this process to key culinary staff who will assist the student in the day-to-day management of their special dietary needs. These students will be apprised of Dining Services' culinary process for handling special dietary requests, communication strategies, arrangements for special meal orders, and procurement of special dietary products as available.

The Director of University Nutrition and the Campus Chefs will be the main contacts for students or any customers with special dietary needs.

Provide appropriate signage that advises customers to self-identify their food allergies at the point-of-service to the server. The server will refer questions to the chef in that location.

Train all staff in allergy awareness.

Maintain communication with the customer to keep Dining Services apprised of how the customer is doing dining on campus so that modifications or adjustments can be made as needed.