

# Navigating Food Allergies and Special Diets on Campus



# Welcome to Miami Dining

Miami University believes that good nutrition is essential to good health. That's why we are committed to nourishing each and every student by providing them with healthy, nutritious foods every day.

Miami University supports students who have food allergies by providing information and knowledge that is necessary to make informed food choices in all of our dining locations.

We work together to provide reasonable arrangements so that students may participate in the college dining experience as much as possible. We account for each individual student's personal dietary needs and make every effort to provide helpful information to those with food allergies.

Our goal is to provide students with the tools they need to be active in the management of their food allergies or food-related medical conditions within the dining locations. We want to provide a safe and supportive transition into college life.



# Food Allergies

## BACKGROUND

According to recent large-scale studies on food allergy (FA) prevalence, more than 33 million Americans have food allergies, including more than 26 million (10.8%) adults and about 5.6 million (7.6%) children.

A food allergy can develop at any time, with nearly 50% of food allergies occurring for the first time as an adult. In addition, nearly 19% of adults believe they have a food allergy. These findings suggest that adults with suspected food allergies receive appropriate confirmatory testing and counseling to ensure food is only avoided when necessary and that quality of life is not needlessly compromised. Reactions from food allergies can affect one's breathing, intestinal tract, heart, and skin. Allergen exposure can be serious and potentially life-threatening. Every three minutes, a food-allergic reaction sends someone to the emergency room.

## WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

A food allergy (FA) is an abnormal immune response to a food ingredient, typically a protein. Food allergic reactions can vary from mild symptoms (hives, lip swelling) to severe and life-threatening symptoms, often called anaphylaxis (difficulty breathing, shock). There is no safe amount of an allergen for those with life-threatening food allergies.

## COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS

Congress passed the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act in 2004 (FALCPA). This law identified eight foods as major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans.

On April 23, 2021, the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research (FASTER) Act was signed into law, declaring sesame as the ninth major food allergen recognized by the United States. This change became effective on January 1, 2023, when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeling requirement added sesame as the ninth major food allergen on food packaging labels.

While these nine allergens cause more than 90% of food allergic reactions, any food ingredient can potentially be an allergen, and more than 170 foods have been documented as responsible for an allergic reaction.

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### References:

Gupta, R. S., Warren, C. M., Smith, B. M., Jiang, J., Blumenstock, J. A., Davis, M. M., Schleimer, R. P., & Nadeau, K. C. (2019). Prevalence and severity of food allergies among US adults. *JAMA Network Open*, 2(1), e185630. doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.5630

Gupta, R. S., Warren, C. M., Smith, B. M., Blumenstock, J. A., Jiang, J., Davis, M. M., & Nadeau, K. C. (2018). The public health impact of parent-reported childhood food allergies in the United States. *Pediatrics*, 142(6). doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-1235



# Celiac Disease

## WHAT IS CELIAC DISEASE?

Celiac disease is a serious autoimmune disease in which gluten ingestion damages the lining of the small intestine.

Celiac disease can have the following side effects if gluten is consumed: vomiting, bloating, weight loss, anemia, chronic fatigue, bone pain, and muscle cramps. Damage occurs to the intestine and can make it difficult for someone with celiac disease to absorb nutrients from the foods they eat.

As many as one in 141 Americans have celiac disease. The only way to manage this disease is by avoiding gluten.

## WHAT IS GLUTEN?

Gluten is a protein commonly found in certain grains like wheat, rye, and barley. These grains are found in breads, pasta, and snacks and may also “hide” in foods and ingredients such as soy sauce, salad dressings, soups, and flavor enhancers.



### Celiac Disease and Gluten-Related Disorders

The dietitians at Miami University have completed the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Celiac Disease and Gluten-Related Disorders Certificate of Training.



# Don't Be Shy, Let Us Know



Follow these important steps to notify us of your food allergy and get connected with the right resources.

- 1.** Notify the Miami University dietitian team of your allergy(ies).  
*[Miami University Food Allergy Disclosure Form](#)*
- 2.** Schedule a meeting with one of our dietitians to develop a plan so you can navigate the dining commons.
- 3.** Register with the Miller Center for Student Disability Services at  
*[MiamiOH.edu/academic-programs/resources-services/student-disability-services](https://MiamiOH.edu/academic-programs/resources-services/student-disability-services)*
- 4.** Be proficient in the self-management of your food allergy(ies):
  - Avoid foods you're allergic to.
  - Recognize symptoms of allergic reactions.
  - Know how and when to tell someone you might be having an allergy-related problem.
  - Know how to properly use medications to treat an allergic reaction.
  - Carry emergency contact information with you at all times.
  - Review policies/procedures with Miami University and your physician should a reaction occur.
- 5.** If you notice something that is problematic for your allergy, or when in doubt regarding ingredients in a particular food or dish, direct your questions to a manager on duty. Please ask a cashier or another employee on duty to contact them.
- 6.** If we do not hear from you, we believe that you are successfully navigating the dining locations.

# Your Responsibilities

It's our goal to provide students who identify as having food allergies or intolerances with the necessary information to make confident food choices.

- Read the station signage, menus, and ingredient information made available upon request and online at [dineoncampus.com/MiamiUniversity](http://dineoncampus.com/MiamiUniversity) to be better informed.
- If you have been prescribed an EpiPen, carry it with you at all times.
- You may ask a dining employee to change his/her gloves.
- Be aware:
  - Frying oil is reused before being changed. This can lead to cross-contact because food fried in oil releases some proteins, which are then absorbed by other foods fried in the same oil.
  - Appliances in common spaces, such as toasters, ovens, and panini presses, have a high risk for cross-contact.

## ALLERGEN DISCLAIMER

Miami University uses manufacturer-provided ingredient information, and we do not confirm the presence or lack of an allergen.

We periodically review ingredients to verify that ingredient labeling is consistent with what is provided by the manufacturer. However, please be advised that the ingredients listed may be subject to change without notification and that products prepared in our kitchen may have come into contact with common food allergens.

Please direct any questions regarding an allergy or food ingredients to any of the managers on duty. For questions, you may also contact a campus dietitian.

## AVOID CROSS-CONTACT

Cross-contact occurs when one food comes into contact with another food and their proteins mix, creating the potential for an allergic reaction.

We train and educate employees involved in the production process to change gloves and clean utensils between recipes, or at least every 30 minutes, to reduce cross-contact concerns.

Always inform the manager on duty of your allergy or dietary restriction to assess the risk or possible cross-contact in the meal. Each cook/frontline associate is also instructed to follow standardized recipes as written so as not to introduce any item to the recipe that is not on the recipe card.

Frequent production audits are performed to assess recipe adherence and production processes and to stay informed of new products being purchased.

# Your Resources

The following services from Miami University are available to help you manage your food allergy(ies):

1. A one-on-one meeting with a Miami University dietitian to develop a plan for navigating the residential dining facilities.
2. The managers on duty are available in residential dining commons to address questions/concerns and serve as important resources. When in a particular unit, please ask for a manager or email a dietitian at [diningdietitian@MiamiOH.edu](mailto:diningdietitian@MiamiOH.edu).
3. Introduction to the dining management team to give you direct access to individuals responsible for food preparation.
4. Download the Dine on Campus app or go online at [dineoncampus.com/MiamiUniversity](http://dineoncampus.com/MiamiUniversity) and review daily menus and ingredient lists ahead of time.
5. Access to the Miami University culinary team to provide package labels for all dry and cold food storage items. This ensures you can review ingredients personally to make the best decisions for your dietary needs.
6. Access to individually packaged foods to replace bulk items that have a high likelihood of cross-contact (i.e., packets of cream cheese, jelly, and syrup).

Miami University wants you to feel at home in our dining spaces. During your individual meeting with dining services, please provide a wish list of items that are your favorites so that we can try to ensure the availability of individually packaged items for you.



# Specific Allergy Information

Refer to the menus and ingredient information made available to you. We use manufacturer-provided information, and we do not confirm the presence or lack of an allergen. Miami University periodically reviews ingredients to verify ingredient labeling is consistent with what is provided by the manufacturer. Ingredients listed may be subject to change without notification.

**Students with food allergies are asked to check the menus and full ingredient list. If you have any questions, just ask a manager, chef, or dietitian.**



## WHEAT ALLERGIES / GLUTEN

Gluten-free cereals and gluten-free breads are available daily. Other gluten-free bakery items are available upon request from Delicious Without. Dishes made without gluten are available at residential dining locations along with grab-and-go options at retail locations. Be sure to check the ingredients of all food items you wish to consume. Since gluten can be airborne for up to 24 hours, we cannot use the term gluten-free for items made in-house.\*



## MILK ALLERGIES

A non-dairy milk option (soy or oat milk) is available every day in residential dining. However, milk and milk-based products are ingredients used in many of the menu items served. Items prepared with butter or margarine should also be avoided.



## SOY ALLERGIES

Soybean is present in a large variety of products. Cooking and frying oils may be made from soy. While studies have shown that highly refined soy oil is safe to consume for most with a soy allergy, if a medical professional has noted that you have a severe allergy, you should consider alternate options. Please ask a manager if you would like to review the ingredient label. Avoid products containing soy, such as tofu, miso, tempeh, edamame, soy sauce, and tamari.

\* Even foods commonly prepared without gluten-containing ingredients may not be 'gluten-free.' Our recipes are prepared in open kitchens, where cross-contact is possible and where ingredient substitutions are sometimes made. If you have celiac disease or a gluten sensitivity, we advise eating at Delicious Without, our dedicated allergen-friendly station.





### EGG ALLERGIES

Many of our baked goods and desserts contain eggs. Students are asked to take caution with all baked goods.



### SHELLFISH ALLERGIES

Avoid entrées and mixed dishes that contain shellfish (such as crab, shrimp, lobster, clams, mussels, oysters, and octopus) as a main component. Use caution when selecting Asian dishes, where shellfish may be included in sauces. Additionally, shellfish is sometimes found in bouillabaisse, fish stocks, sushi, or seafood flavoring.



### FISH ALLERGIES

Entrées and mixed dishes that contain finfish as a main component, please use caution when selecting Asian dishes, where fish may be included in sauces. Additionally, fish is sometimes found in some gravies, barbecue sauces, Worcestershire sauces, Caesar salads, sushi, and some dressings.



### PEANUT ALLERGIES

Peanuts are not brought into our kitchens or food preparation areas. We take precautions to review food labeling to ensure that no menu items or ingredients contain peanuts. Our dining commons offer sunflower butter as a replacement for peanut butter.



### TREE NUT ALLERGIES

Tree nuts are not brought into our kitchens or food preparation areas. We take precautions to review food labeling to ensure that no menu items or ingredients contain tree nuts.



### SESAME ALLERGIES

Sesame is present in items like hummus, baba ganoush, breads, bagels, sushi, falafel, tempeh, veggie burgers, and dressings, to name a few.

# Dietary Icons on Campus



Refer to the menus and ingredient information made available to you. We use manufacturer-provided information, and we do not confirm the presence or lack of an allergen. Miami University periodically reviews ingredients to verify ingredient labeling is consistent with what is provided by the manufacturer. Ingredients listed may be subject to change without notification.

**Students with food allergies are asked to check the menus and full ingredient list. If you have any questions, just ask a manager, chef, or dietitian.**

## VG

### VEGAN

Foods that contain no animal-based ingredients or animal by-products, including egg, dairy, and honey.

## V

### VEGETARIAN

Contains no meat, poultry, fish, or seafood but may contain eggs or dairy.

## PR

### GOOD SOURCE OF PROTEIN

Food items that contain at least seven grams of protein per serving.



### CLIMATE FRIENDLY

Recipes with low greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and have agricultural and ingredient processing impacts that are lower than 70% of all products assessed by HowGood.

# delicious without

food for all, with none of the allergens

Delicious Without (DWO) stations feature food that is simply prepared, seasoned, and served by a trained associate. The station is dedicated to foods prepared without the nine major food allergens (milk, wheat, egg, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, and sesame) and gluten.

DWO has a dedicated storage area and uses dedicated cookware and utensils. All food is prepared and cooked exclusively within the allergen station, separate from the main dining commons kitchen.

DWO is regularly tested for gluten, sensitive to 5 ppm. Staff at DWO participates in training specific to food allergies and celiac disease.

**Find this station at Maplestreet Dining Commons and Western Dining Commons.**



# Allergic Reaction

If you are at risk of anaphylaxis, please keep in mind the info below.

- ▷ If you have been prescribed an epinephrine auto-injector, keep it with you at all times!
- ▷ Wear medical alert identification at all times.
- ▷ Have an emergency care plan in place. Review these [FARE Resources](#) to create your own individual response plan.

If you are having a reaction, get help immediately!

- ▷ Administer your medication (e.g., epinephrine auto-injector).
- ▷ Call 911 or ask someone to call for you. Let them know you are having a food allergic reaction.
- ▷ Do not go back to your room alone.

## View Our Menus!

Utilize the Dine On Campus app to review menus and ingredient information for your dining locations, so you can make the right decisions for you.



# MEET YOUR DIETITIANS

Food allergies or special diets?  
We are here to help.



**Julie Vasilak**  
M.A., RDN, LD

Senior Registered  
Dietitian



**Kathy Adams**  
PH.D., M.S., M.P.H., RDN, LD

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. WHAT IF I NEED SPECIAL DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS?

Students with allergens are encouraged to register through the Miller Center for Student Disability Services to facilitate special arrangements for meals and specific food requests in dining and retail locations. It is imperative to register so we can accommodate your specific dietary needs.

## 2. WHAT MEASURES ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT GLUTEN EXPOSURE?

At Delicious Without, we have enhanced cleaning protocols to remove any elements of gluten on surfaces used for dining prep, cook, and service. Additionally, gluten identification tests are used daily in preparation areas. Delicious Without uses dedicated utensils and cookware to prevent cross-contamination.

## 3. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "GLUTEN-FREE" AND "AVOIDING GLUTEN"?

Avoiding Gluten means our products do not include any fresh or manufactured food that contains gluten. Gluten-Free means the food item contains less than 20 ppm of gluten, which can only be determined through laboratory testing. Since we prepare products in common kitchens with shared equipment, it is not possible that our products can maintain gluten-free status as established by the manufacturer.



# Notes

# Coming Fall Semester 2025!



**PATIO**  
*Grill*

**DELICIOUSLY FRESH • ALLERGEN FREE**

We're excited to announce Patio Grill, a new dining concept launching in fall semester 2025! Offering delicious meals prepared without the nine major food allergens (milk, wheat, egg, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, and sesame) and gluten, Patio Grill will provide a safe and convenient option for those with dietary restrictions.

Meals will be available for pick-up in secure lockers attached to Garden Dining Commons, making it easy to grab and go! Stay tuned for more details as we get closer to launch.