



Allergy Awareness at Special Events

Sharing meals is often one of the highlights of a holiday or special event. Here are some tips for serving guests with allergies:

Be prepared. Find out ahead of time if any of your guests have food allergies. Try your best to serve foods that everyone can eat. This may be easier than making special dishes for those with allergies. For example, if someone is allergic to peanuts, plan to serve everyone peanut-free foods.

Know your food ingredients. A child or parent with allergies may ask about the ingredients in your homemade food item. Make sure you can provide an ingredient list including spices.

For packaged items, look at the ingredients list or contact the manufacturer if you have questions. Ingredients in packaged products can change, so check the label each time you serve a food item. “Holiday versions and shapes” of items you may normally buy may that are packaged in a different facility and may contain nuts.

Avoid cross-contamination. Cross-contamination happens when an allergen (food causing allergy) is spread to other foods, utensils or counter tops. It can easily happen when making foods at home. For example, nut-free cookies are packed in a container that was not washed thoroughly after being used for cookies with nuts.

If you are serving a special food to guests with allergies, be sure to keep it in its own container, rather than serving it on a tray of mixed items.

For more information on food allergies, please visit:

- Child Care Allergies: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page8944.aspx>
- Health Canada www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/allerg/index-eng.php.
- Anaphylaxis Canada: www.anaphylaxis.ca/
- Healthy Canadians: <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/allergies/index-eng.php>

For more information on Healthy Eating, visit:

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/page2914.aspx>

