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Contact: Adrienne Walkowiak  
[Adrienne@AdrienneWalkowiak.com](mailto:Adrienne@AdrienneWalkowiak.com)  
603/659-9345

## **AllergyEats Founder Offers Tips for Dining Out with Food Allergies & Intolerances**

### ***AllergyEats is Biggest & Fastest Growing Source for Finding Allergy-Friendly Restaurants***

BOSTON, MA (March 14, 2011) – Dining out is one of America’s favorite pastimes, but for the millions of people with food allergies and intolerances, the experience can often be frustrating and stressful. Paul Antico, founder of AllergyEats ([www.allergyeats.com](http://www.allergyeats.com)), the biggest and fastest growing source for finding allergy-friendly restaurants, understands these challenges first-hand, from dining out with his three food allergic children. Over the past year, AllergyEats – a free, peer-based resource – has significantly improved the way food allergic and gluten-intolerant individuals find “allergy-friendly” restaurants. Now, Paul is sharing his personal tips for dining out with food allergies and intolerances.

“Families with food allergies hope that all restaurants will cater to food-allergic diners, but some restaurants are far more accommodating than others. A growing number of restaurants have extensive food-allergy protocols in place, educating their staff about food allergies and procedures, avoiding cross-contamination, and sharing detailed information about the ingredients in each dish. Other establishments are unable – or unwilling – to prepare meals without diners’ allergy triggers, such as nuts, dairy, eggs, gluten, shellfish, and more,” said Antico.

“Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a completely allergy-safe restaurant. While many restaurants have gone to great lengths to be as allergy-friendly as possible, food-allergic individuals – or their caretakers – still need to take 100% responsibility for their own safety,” Antico continued.

As the father of three food-allergic children, the founder of AllergyEats, and a proactive food allergy advocate, Antico offers the following advice based on his personal and professional experience:

- **Do some homework in advance.** Find dining recommendations from others within the food allergy community through an online resource like AllergyEats ([www.allergyeats.com](http://www.allergyeats.com)). Check menus and allergen information on restaurants’ websites, which is also available on AllergyEats. Call a restaurant with any questions before you leave the house.
- **Try to dine at off-peak hours** when restaurant staff is less harried and better able to take the proper precautions with your order.
- Once you arrive at the restaurant, **inform the host/hostess and server about your food allergies.** Be very clear, but polite. Ask them how they will be able to accommodate your specific needs. If you do not feel completely confident after speaking to the server, ask to talk to the manager and/or chef. Most importantly, if after speaking to the restaurant staff, you don’t feel comfortable, leave and find another restaurant.
- When you speak with the restaurant staff, you should **receive confident answers** to any of the following questions: What protocols do you have in place to serve food-allergic individuals? Which items on your menu are not safe, given my specific food allergies? How are diners’ allergies communicated to the kitchen and other staff? How is the kitchen set up to prevent

cross-contamination? Is separate equipment used to prepare orders for food-allergic individuals? What kind of oil will be used in the preparation of my order and is it safe, given my allergies? Can I see the list of ingredients for a given menu item?

- When you receive your meal, **politely ask the server if he or she is sure that this food is safe** for you and if there was any chance of cross-contamination.
- **Stop and look carefully at your meal** to see if any of your offending allergens are present (i.e. grated cheese, pesto, nuts, etc.). This may sound obvious, but Antico has found that some restaurants follow all of the “rules” to accommodate a food allergy, and then mistakenly do something as obvious as grating cheese on top of a dairy-allergic diner’s salad.
- If the restaurant answered all of your questions and accommodated your special requests, be sure to **thank them, leave a generous tip and let them know you’ll return thanks to your positive experience.**

Whether your experience was positive or negative – or somewhere in between – do the food allergy community a great service by rating the restaurant on AllergyEats ([www.allergyeats.com](http://www.allergyeats.com)). Rating a restaurant is simple and quick (it takes less than a minute) and helps other food-allergic individuals determine which restaurants to visit, based on the peer ratings and feedback.

AllergyEats, a free website, lists well over 600,000 restaurants nationwide, which food allergic diners can rate. The site also offers information on restaurants’ menus (including gluten-free menus), allergen lists, nutrition information, certifications, web links, directions and more.

This free, user-friendly website provides valuable peer-based feedback about how well (or poorly) restaurants accommodate the needs of food-allergic customers. The peer ratings and feedback allow food-allergic and gluten-intolerant diners to quickly and easily find restaurants that will cater to their special dietary requirements – and avoid the ones that won’t.

Most restaurant review sites include information about establishments’ food, ambiance or service, but AllergyEats is singularly focused on food allergies, with peer reviews spotlighting where people with food allergies or intolerances have more comfortably eaten.

AllergyEats has been endorsed by highly-respected food, health and allergy organizations, including the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Gluten Intolerance Group, Massachusetts Restaurant Association and more. Antico serves on the Board of Directors for the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, both nationally and for the New England Chapter, and he’s a passionate advocate for food allergy awareness and education.

For more information, please visit [www.AllergyEats.com](http://www.AllergyEats.com).

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