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Hitting the Road for Fall Sports Season? Use Tips, Resources from AllergyEats, The Leading Guide to Allergy-Friendly Restaurants

BOSTON, MA (August 28, 2012) – Millions of athletes will be lacing up their cleats this fall, gearing up for sports practices and competitions. That means families nationwide will be spending significant time on the road, traveling to games, meets, practices and tournaments. The schedules and logistics can be overwhelming for anyone, but families with food allergies face an additional stress – finding restaurants that can accommodate their special dietary restrictions. AllergyEats (www.allergyeats.com), the leading guide to allergy-friendly restaurants, offers a valuable, free solution.

AllergyEats, a peer-based website and smartphone app, is dramatically improving the way food-allergic and gluten intolerant individuals find allergy-friendly restaurants. Founded by Paul Antico, the father of three children with food allergies, AllergyEats helps food-allergic families quickly and easily find restaurants that will cater to their special dietary requirements – and avoid the ones that won't.

"We're a sports family, and totally understand the complexity of juggling practices and games – especially with so much travel involved. Like many other families, we're managing complicated, insanely busy schedules. Since we spend so much time traveling during soccer and hockey season each fall, we often need to eat at restaurants in unfamiliar locations, which can be challenging and stressful with three food-allergic kids," said Paul Antico, founder of AllergyEats.

"As anyone in the food allergy community can attest, it's not always practical to stop at any restaurant and expect them to be able to accommodate our special dietary needs. Therefore, we depend on AllergyEats, a tremendously valuable resource for food-allergic families, to help us make smarter, more informed decisions, using more than two years' worth of allergy-friendliness ratings and comments from other food-allergic diners," Antico continued.

Antico, who spends considerable time traveling to his kids' soccer and hockey games, offers the following advice:

- **Do your homework in advance.** Sports season means long hours on the road - and dining in unfamiliar areas. Use AllergyEats to research restaurants in your destination city and along your route. AllergyEats provides peer-based allergy-friendliness ratings and comments, as well as more than 450,000 restaurants' menus (including gluten-free menus), websites, allergen information and more. The free smartphone app is handy - and easy to use - when you're on the road.
- **Ask questions.** Ask restaurant staff about ingredient lists, how food is prepared and special protocols to prevent cross-contamination. Ask open-ended instead of "yes/no" questions. ("What kind of oil do you use to cook the French fries?" vs. "Are the French fries cooked in peanut oil?") The restaurant staff should provide confident answers to all of your questions. If you're not comfortable with their responses, leave and find another restaurant.

- **Dine at off-peak hours, when possible.** Restaurant staff are often better able to take the proper precautions with your order when they're less busy.
- **Be prepared.** Even the most conscientious restaurants can make mistakes. Always carry your child's Epi-Pen, Benadryl or other allergy medications. If your child is traveling with their coach or another parent, be absolutely sure they know the signs of an allergic reaction, how and when to administer the medicine, and how to reach you in case of an emergency.
- **Think beyond meals.** At the beginning of the season, talk to your child's coach and teammates' parents about your child's food allergies. If snacks are served at practices and games, ask politely for everyone's cooperation in avoiding your child's trigger foods. Educate them (nicely) about what foods are off-limits for your child and be proactive in offering suggestions for safer snacks. Be kind - but clear - in your instructions as you advocate for your child's safety.
- **Encourage team spirit.** Ask the coaches and other parents to help your child feel included in the team's experiences. If the team is going out for pizza after a game, use [AllergyEats](#) to find a place that offers gluten-free crust or dairy-free options, allowing your food-allergic child to participate in this shared experience.
- **Rate your experiences.** When you dine out, whether your restaurant experience was positive or negative - or somewhere in between - do the food allergy community a great service by rating each restaurant on AllergyEats. Rating a restaurant is simple and quick (it takes less than a minute) and helps other food-allergic individuals determine which restaurants to visit - and which to avoid.

AllergyEats, a free website and smartphone app, lists more than 575,000 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.

AllergyEats helps families with food allergies reduce the guesswork - and the anxiety - surrounding dining out with food allergies. The peer-based ratings and review site lets people see at-a-glance which restaurants have been more willing and better able to accommodate special dietary requirements, allowing food-allergic diners to make more informed choices about where to dine.

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 and individuals, including the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Gluten Intolerance Group, Massachusetts Restaurant Association, Chef Ming Tsai, Chef Joel Schaefer and more. And AllergyEats was recently selected as the About.com 2012 Readers' Choice Award winner for best Food Allergy App. (AllergyEats was also a finalist for the competition's Best Food Allergy Online Support category.) For more information, please visit www.AllergyEats.com.

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