

## **AllergyEats Informs Food Allergy Community About Important Changes To Fast Food Restaurants' Menus**

### ***AllergyEats, the Most Comprehensive Source for Finding Allergy-Friendly Restaurants, Reports Details of Wendy's & Burger King's New Menus, Ingredients, Preparation Techniques***

BOSTON, MA (January 30, 2012) – In many instances change is good, but as restaurants update their menus in an effort to stay competitive, these changes can be dangerous for the food allergy community. When restaurants periodically revamp their menus, seemingly minor changes (like buttering a hamburger bun) can have a major impact on food-allergic customers, causing them to get ill or even have life-threatening reactions, according to Paul Antico, Founder of AllergyEats ([www.allergyeats.com](http://www.allergyeats.com)), the most comprehensive source for finding allergy-friendly restaurants.

Fast food chain Wendy's recently changed their menu and now, for the first time ever, they're serving some of their burgers and sandwiches on buttered buns, significantly impacting dairy-allergic customers. Additionally, Wendy's is toasting their buttered buns, so *any* toasted bun - even unbuttered ones - could potentially become cross-contaminated with butter in the toaster, creating a risk for dairy-allergic diners.

And Burger King just introduced a new thicker-cut French fry made with ingredients intended to make them "fluffier". The new fries are still free of the "Big 8" allergens (which include dairy, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, fish and shellfish), but the full list of ingredients has obviously changed. People with less common food allergies need to be made aware of the new fries and should investigate the updated ingredient list on Burger King's website before ordering them - even if they've comfortably eaten fries from this fast food chain in the past.

"I appreciate that restaurants need to evolve to stay competitive in the marketplace, but when a restaurant changes their ingredient list or preparation techniques, I believe they should communicate the changes to their customers, knowing that it could impact guests with food allergies," said Paul Antico, Founder of AllergyEats, food allergy advocate and father of three food-allergic children. "A staff person at Wendy's may not think it's a big deal to butter hamburger buns, but that one seemingly minor change could make a dairy-allergic customer dangerously ill."

"There are a couple of important issues at play here, in addition to these menu changes. Most fast food restaurants are owned by franchisees, and while these local owners are supposed to follow the recipes and protocols set out by the corporate office, some restaurants may stray a little or a lot, which can be dangerous for food-allergic customers," Antico explained.

"Compounding the problem, many fast food restaurants hire young, inexperienced staff - and experience a high volume of staff turnover - so at any given time, there's likely someone who is untrained and uneducated about food allergy issues preparing the food," Antico continued.

Antico urges people with food allergies to always inform restaurant employees about their food allergies and ask about ingredient lists, dedicated fryers and possible cross contact - even if they've comfortably eaten at that establishment in the past. And he urges all restaurants to clearly inform guests about any changes to their menu, ingredients and food preparation so customers can make more informed decisions about what (and where) to eat.

Antico constantly evaluates changes within the restaurant industry and informs the food-allergy community about how these changes may impact them. He regularly updates information on the AllergyEats website, the AllergyEats Blog ([www.allergyeats.com/blog](http://www.allergyeats.com/blog)) and through related social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter.

AllergyEats provides valuable, peer-based ratings and feedback about how well (or poorly) restaurants accommodate food-allergic customers, so the food allergy community can make more informed decisions about where to dine (and which establishments to avoid.) AllergyEats features more than 600,000 restaurants nationwide that users can rate, as well as restaurants' menus (including gluten-free menus), allergen lists, nutrition information, certifications, web links, directions and more.

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 and where they've encountered challenges.

AllergyEats features a new, free AllergyEats app (available at iTunes and the Android store), providing access to important information about restaurants' peer ratings, feedback, menus and other information while on-the-go. And the new AllergyEats Disney World microsite ([www.allergyeats.com/disney](http://www.allergyeats.com/disney)) focuses on the allergy-friendliness of the restaurants in and around the popular theme parks and greater Orlando area.

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

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