

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

## **AllergyEats Makes Traveling Easier This Spring, Helps Families Find Food Allergy-Friendly Restaurants Nationwide**

***AllergyEats, The Most Comprehensive Source for Finding Allergy-Friendly Restaurants,  
Offers Free Peer-Based Ratings, Tips & Info-Sharing Forums***

BOSTON, MA (March 19, 2012) – Millions of people will travel this season for spring break, school vacation and the Easter/Passover holidays, and for most of them, these trips mean fun, relaxation and wonderful adventures. But for the 15 million people with food allergies (and their families), traveling can be a source of tremendous anxiety. Dining in unfamiliar cities and restaurants - which may or may not be able to accommodate their special dietary requirements - can be extremely stressful. Worrying about a possible allergic reaction compounds the problem. But the food allergy community can depend on AllergyEats ([www.allergyeats.com](http://www.allergyeats.com)), the biggest and fastest growing source for finding allergy-friendly restaurants, to help them more comfortably dine out wherever they are - resulting in a more enjoyable, less stressful trip.

"I've traveled extensively with my children - who are allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, sesame and dairy - and have learned some key lessons from our experiences," said Paul Antico, Founder of AllergyEats, food allergy advocate and parent of three food-allergic children. "There have been countless times that my family has spent up to an hour or more visiting many different restaurants, looking for places that could accommodate my children's multiple food allergies. I've learned the importance of planning ahead, researching menus and gathering peer feedback to make more informed decisions about our restaurant choices."

Antico offers the following tips for traveling with food allergies and intolerances:

- **Research restaurants in advance.** "Whether you're traveling across town or across the country, doing online research first is a wise move. Look up restaurants' menus, ingredient lists and allergen statements. A site like AllergyEats can be incredibly helpful, allowing you to find restaurants where other food-allergic diners have had positive experiences and avoid the ones that are less allergy-friendly," said Antico. "Additionally, interactive smartphone apps, like the free AllergyEats app, provide mobile access to allergy-friendliness restaurant ratings, as well as restaurants' websites, menus, directions, phone numbers and more."
- **Be prepared.** Always travel with Epi-pens, Benadryl or other allergy medications in case of an allergic reaction. Know where to go for medical help in your destination city (and along the way). Even restaurants with the best intentions and food allergy protocols can occasionally have a mishap, so always be prepared in case of an emergency.

- **Ask open-ended questions.** Inquire about ingredient lists, restaurants' procedures for avoiding cross-contamination and staff communication protocols - but in a way that inspires ongoing dialogue. Antico's son is allergic to peanuts, so instead of asking, for instance, if French fries are cooked in peanut oil, which results in a yes or no answer, he asks what kind of oil is used in the fryer. "By keeping my questions open-ended, the server is forced to ask the chef about any unknowns – as opposed to possibly guessing – and I feel more comfortable making decisions based on those answers," Antico explained.
- **Read ingredient lists and labels.** Families with food allergies are accustomed to reading ingredient labels at the supermarket to avoid products containing their allergy triggers, and they shouldn't be shy about doing the same in restaurants. Comments on the AllergyEats Blog show that many food-allergic diners ask to read ingredient labels at restaurants, where available, to double-check that the sauces, breads and other foods are free of their allergens. If the restaurant staff doesn't offer to show you ingredient lists and labels, ask to see them.
- **Avoid restaurant buffets.** Even if a dish wasn't cooked with peanuts, dairy, eggs, gluten, or your other allergy triggers, it can easily be cross-contaminated from other items or utensils in a buffet. Your best bet is to avoid buffets altogether and politely ask the restaurant staff if they could please prepare a separate meal that's free of your food allergens.
- **Stay vigilant wherever you go.** Your favorite local restaurant may be terrific about accommodating your child's food allergies, but never assume that another restaurant – even if it's part of the same chain – will be able to cater to your child's needs as well. "Chain restaurants often have different owners and managers at each location - each with a different level of food allergy knowledge, experience and training," Antico explained. "Ask questions and be cautious every time you dine out."
- **Leverage the food allergy community for advice, tips and info-sharing.** Discussions on food allergy Blogs and social media sites (including the AllergyEats Facebook page and blog: <http://www.facebook.com/AllergyEats> and [www.allergyeats.com/Blog](http://www.allergyeats.com/Blog)) contain helpful information from the food allergy community. These forums offer great tips, advice and "lessons learned" about traveling with food allergies.
- **Trust your instincts.** Does the restaurant's server, manager and/or chef sound confident and knowledgeable about how to handle your special meal preparation? If not, leave and find another restaurant.

"As someone with food intolerances myself, I'm constantly looking for ways to increase my comfort level when traveling. AllergyEats is helpful and easy-to-use - even while on-the-go. And the new AllergyEats Disney World microsite ([www.allergyeats.com/disney](http://www.allergyeats.com/disney)) helps families navigate the many restaurant options in and around the theme parks, reducing the worry that often accompanies traveling with food allergies," said Joel Schaefer, CCC, CHT, author, chef, educator, food allergy advocate and the former Culinary Development and Special Dietary Needs Manager at Walt Disney World, which is considered the "gold standard" for accommodating food-allergic guests.

"AllergyEats helps families with food allergies reduce the guesswork - and the anxiety - surrounding dining out while traveling. My family knows how nerve-wracking it can be to dine in unfamiliar restaurants, so I've created this peer-based ratings and review site that lets people see at-a-glance which restaurants are willing and better able to accommodate special dietary requirements - and which are not," Antico explained. "This resource is making it more comfortable for many food-allergic travelers to dine out."

As a former mutual fund manager at Fidelity Investments, Antico was frustrated with the inconsistencies in restaurants – some were willing to cook meals without his children's food allergens and some were not. He wondered why there wasn't a quick, easy online restaurant guide that indicated where food-allergic individuals could more comfortably eat. So he created one.

AllergyEats, a free website, 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 lists well over 625,000 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.

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.

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