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**12 Million Americans Have Food Allergies:
Unique New Website Helps Them Find Accommodating Restaurants**
*AllergyEats Allows Users to Find (and Rate) 600,000+ Restaurants,
Is Fastest Growing Source for Finding Allergy-Friendly Establishments*

BOSTON, MA (August 2, 2010) – More than 12 million Americans have food allergies, which is one in 25 people or 4% of the population. The numbers are higher for children under the age of 3, as a staggering 6% have been diagnosed with food allergies. Additionally, another 3 million people have Celiac Disease (gluten intolerance).

There's no known cure for food allergies, and people with food allergies must carefully avoid all "trigger foods," as even trace amounts can cause a reaction. Food allergies are the leading cause of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) outside of the hospital setting in the U.S., causing between 50,000 and 125,000 emergency room visits per year.

Food allergies are life-altering for everyone involved and require constant vigilance. The millions of people with food allergies must take special precautions everywhere they go, including dining out at restaurants.

"As a parent of food allergic children, I've learned firsthand that some restaurants are extremely accommodating, preparing meals to meet the needs of their food allergic customers. But other establishments are uncomfortable, unable or unwilling to prepare special meals based on the diner's specific allergies, which could include dairy, nuts, shellfish and eggs, among other foods. I thought it would be really helpful to know in advance whether a restaurant would accommodate my kids' special food requirements," said Paul Antico, the "Founding Father" of AllergyEats.

Antico's innovative solution – AllergyEats (www.AllergyEats.com) – is a new, interactive, peer-based website. This free website collects feedback from diners nationwide, providing allergy-friendliness ratings outlining how well (or poorly) a restaurant accommodates special food requirements.

AllergyEats 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. In the past several months, AllergyEats has become **the fastest-growing source for finding allergy-friendly restaurants.**

"I know from experience how frustrating, scary and even maddening it can be to dine out with food allergies. This type of uncertainty takes the joy out of our restaurant experiences," Antico explained. "I realized that other food-allergic families were facing similar challenges, and I started AllergyEats to be a valuable resource to the millions of people in the food allergy community."

AllergyEats, which launched in February, has quickly grown in popularity. The site combines the best of Internet technology with peer-to-peer feedback to help people select restaurants that cater to individuals with food allergies – and to avoid the ones that won't accommodate their needs. The value of AllergyEats comes from the ratings and comments from other diners, which represents real experiences from real people.

Users are encouraged to answer three simple questions about their dining experience, which takes less than a minute. The answers are compiled into an objective “allergy-friendliness rating” that provides at-a-glance information about the “allergy friendliness” of specific restaurants. There's also a section for written comments, which focuses specifically on food-allergy related information.

AllergyEats is searchable by geographic location, and includes maps and driving directions to restaurants nationally. There's also a blog and social media pages for additional interactive discussions and information sharing.

“Most restaurant review sites are about establishments' food, ambiance or service. AllergyEats is unique because it's completely focused on food allergies, with peer reviews spotlighting where people with food allergies can comfortably eat,” said Elaine Erenrich Rosenberg, Executive Director, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, New England Chapter. “AllergyEats is a great resource for people with food allergies, whether they're dining out in their hometowns or looking for allergy-friendly restaurants while traveling.”

“I'm so pleased by the feedback I've received from AllergyEats members, who say the site is helpful and easy to use,” Antico continued. “The food allergy community really supports each other through their ratings, comments and lively discussions on our FaceBook page, spotlighting allergy-friendly restaurants across the country. We've even had members recommend food-allergy friendly vacations, including cruise lines that cater to food allergic customers.”

A variety of well-respected food, health and allergy organizations endorse AllergyEats, including the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Gluten Intolerance Group, and the Massachusetts Restaurant Association.

For more information, please visit www.AllergyEats.com.

* Statistics courtesy of The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network

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