

# Socializing with Friends and Food Allergies



We hear this line when we are kids, and we hear it when we are adults. Somehow between childhood and adulthood, people still don't understand that food allergy severity has a very wide range. Often times, people confuse food intolerances and food allergies, and then cross-contact is the farthest thing from being understood.

The holidays are a wonderful time of year. There are more than enough social gatherings to attend and food is usually the star of the event. A traditional cookie swap could be a nightmare, especially when someone says "well, I have a food allergy, too." and claims that the cookies will be safe! It is hard as an adult to show a lack of trust in a close friend or family member, but remember your health and safety should always come first; even if it means asking uncomfortable questions one too many times. When invited to an event, still take the same amount of caution and protocol to ensure your safety.

## Pre-Party Checklist:

- Speak with the host and ask what he/she is serving. Consider asking to review any food labels once you arrive.
- Work with the event organizer to properly label all food items being served.
- Ask that if it is a potluck or cookie swap, for them to give you the contacts of each person or to separate their food from the rest in colored containers.
  - The above step allows you to take the extra leap to ensure all food is safe or just stick to the host's options.
- There may be other attendees with the same or different allergy. It is important to explain your food allergy and your protocol.

Having a healthy social life with a food allergy is important. It is key to be confident in knowing your allergy and the steps pre-event that you will need to take to ensure a safe and fun event!

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Find out more on managing food allergies as an adult:

<https://www.FoodAllergyAwareness.org/education/adults-with-food-allergies/>