SAFETABLE SOLUTIONS

FREE GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Questions to Ask Dining Services During Your Campus Visit

A checklist for families of college-bound students with food allergies, celiac disease, alpha-gal syndrome, and other medically necessary diets

Know Before You Go

The standard campus tour rarely covers dining accommodations in any depth, and tour guides usually can't answer detailed questions. A little planning makes the visit far more useful.

Contact dining services ahead of time and ask to meet with the dietitian or dining manager during your visit. Email disability services (sometimes called accessibility services) too, since they often handle the formal accommodation process. Plan to eat a meal in the main dining hall so you can see how things work on an ordinary day. The student should ask as many of these questions as possible. How staff responds is a preview of the next four years.

Print this list, bring a pen, and take notes for each school.

The Questions

- [ ] **1** Is there a registered dietitian on staff, and if so, how can students reach them directly?
- [ ] **2** Is there a dedicated allergen-free station or kitchen? Which allergens does it exclude?
- [ ] **3** Are allergen-free options (with variety) available at every meal, every day, including weekends and late nights, and located in a convenient place on campus?
- [ ] **4** Are menu items labeled for the major allergens online and in person, and how are the labels verified?
- [ ] **5** Is full ingredient information available online, in person, and/or by request, including for sauces, dressings, and fryer oils?
- [ ] **6** Who is available during meal times to answer ingredient and cross-contact questions?

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- [ ] **7** How do you prevent cross-contact in the kitchen, such as separate prep areas, utensils, fryers, and toasters?

- [ ] **8** Can students request a meal prepared to order? How does that work at a busy mealtime (e.g., is there an app or form)?

- [ ] **9** What allergy training do dining staff receive, and how often? Does it include student workers?

- [ ] **10** What is the emergency plan if a student has an allergic reaction in a dining hall, and is there stocked epinephrine in the dining halls?

- [ ] **11** What is the process for requesting a dietary accommodation, and which office handles it?

- [ ] **12** How are dietary needs handled at campus events, orientation, catered functions, and athletic or club travel?

No school will be perfect, and a less developed program isn't necessarily a dealbreaker. But the answers to these questions will tell you how much work the student will need to do on their own, and how much support they can count on.

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Want help evaluating the schools on your list?

Asking the right questions is the first step. Knowing whether the answers hold up is the next one. Quite often, a school's real-world accommodations differ from what's described on a tour or website.

SafeTable Solutions researches the colleges on the student's list and prepares confidential, individualized reports so you can walk into every visit knowing what to look for and whom to ask.

Book a free consultation

Web safetablesolutions.com Email info@safetablesolutions.com Phone (434) 205-1529

This checklist is for general informational purposes only and is not medical or legal advice. Always consult the student's healthcare providers regarding their specific needs.