



Preparing for College with Food Allergies

Questions to ask Dining Services

How do you accommodate your current students with food allergies?

On campus, there is an allergen solutions station at one of our residential dining halls called True Balance. True Balance is a program designed to accommodate students with food allergies and help alleviate their concerns as they make meal selections in our residential dining hall. This allergen solutions station provides a menu that excludes ingredients and products containing any of the top 7 allergens, including shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, milk, eggs, or wheat. Fin fish, the other top allergen, is included in the menu at this station to provide a variety of protein options for these students. Our registered dietitian completes a monthly checklist at the True Balance station to ensure all processes and procedures are being followed according to Aramark policy.

For students who have Celiac Disease and following a gluten free diet, we have a Gluten Solutions program that contains made without gluten options available at all 3 residential dining locations. These include hot menu items, grab n' go options, as well as items available upon request. In addition, there is designated equipment and utensils at all 3 locations. Made without gluten products are also at many of our retail locations and can be found on the Gluten Solutions Guide.

We have dairy alternative milks available at all 3 residential dining halls and some convenience stores for individuals who are lactose intolerant or have milk allergies (in addition to True Balance). We also use dairy-free cheese in some of our vegan dishes.

Will I be required to live on campus and eat in the dining halls?

All first year students living on campus are required to have a meal plan. USF Dining Services is committed to providing a variety of options, as well as making accommodations for students with food allergies and dietary restrictions. Please fill out the Special Dietary Request/Food Allergy Form, which can be found at: <https://usf.campusdish.com/HealthAndWellness/OnCampusResources>. Once you have completed this form, the registered dietitian will set up an appointment with you to discuss your needs. Working with the dietitian is a great benefit of the meal plan because you can get a better understanding for what foods and beverages are safest for you to consume on campus. Additionally, nutritional gaps and substitutions can be discussed to ensure you are getting a variety of food groups, as well as adequate nutrients in your diet!

Can I tour the dining facility during normal service hours? (This will help you see how the dining hall functions during busier times.)

You can certainly tour any of our dining facilities during normal service hours. If this is something you are interested in, please contact our registered dietitian to set up an appointment to take you on a tour of our facilities.

Has the dining staff undergone any food allergy training, including how to recognize anaphylaxis? Are there ongoing training reminders?

All Aramark employees are required to complete a Diet & Allergen Training with our registered dietitian. With over 1,000 employees on campus, more than 50% of both residential and retail employees have been trained or retrained since November 2019. Diet & Allergen trainings are now to be completed during onboarding orientation and then once every year following that.

Any employee working at the allergen solutions station, True Balance, receives an additional specific training. Within the **True Balance** training, employees learn about the various symptoms of an allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis. Additionally, recognizing signs of anaphylaxis is included in our updated 2020 True Balance training.

What are the emergency procedures in your dining facilities?

USF Dining Services has strict protocols for handling an allergic emergency. If an individual shows symptoms (indicated in our training) or states they are or may be having an allergic reaction, the following steps take place:

1. Contact Emergency Services:
 - Provide establishment's address
 - State that someone is having a severe allergic reaction
 - Request epinephrine
2. Call 1-800-645-RISK to report the incident
3. Complete the Foodborne Investigation Form on the SAFE portal

Do staff take steps to avoid food cross-contact?

All employees learn about cross-contact during the Diet & Allergen training, including various ways cross-contact can occur in the food service process and steps to reduce the risk of cross-contact. Location-specific examples are included in the training so that employees working all over campus know how to recognize and take steps to reduce the risk.

At the True Balance station, menus are prepared in a designated area, have designated equipment, utensils and ingredients that are not allowed to be substituted. Preventing risk of cross-contact with allergen-containing foods is one of the most vital parts of True Balance training.

How can students access allergen information for the menus? Are ingredients listed online, in the dining hall or available by request?

Most residential menu ingredients can be found on USF Dining's website at <https://usf.campusdish.com/>. Because our systems are automatically synced, some menu item ingredients may not show up in full. If this occurs, you can either ask an employee for ingredient information or contact the registered dietitian.

Retail locations have a link or PDF with nutrition, allergen and ingredient information that can be accessible through USF Dining's website <https://usf.campusdish.com/>.

Who is the designated person in the dining hall who will answer my questions about food allergies?

Our registered dietitian is in the dining halls frequently and can be contacted directly regarding food allergies.

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