

Do's and Don'ts for non-allergy sufferers

An aid for supporters, family and friends of allergy sufferers

* Do's *

When you're hosting a party or dinner...

Here are list of simple things to remember, they may seem like small things to the average person, but to a food allergy sufferer, it can make a world of difference; literally!

Assume someone may have an allergy – prepare your guest list in advance

If you're unsure about any food allergies – you're better off asking (usually a food allergy sufferer will identify him/herself to you, but it's better to be safe than sorry ☺)

Stay positive and be open to suggestions

Look for alternatives to accommodate your friends

Specific foods to be cautious of...

Soy milk – always ask before serving this

Peanuts – use separate utensils (depending on the severity even the smell make someone sick, so be sure to check this first)

Keep nuts separate from meal, just give people the option of sprinkling it on top

Try not using peanut oil if cooking a meal

Keep a list of ingredients and recipes close by

If it's a larger dinner try putting up labels on each of the dishes

If you're meeting a food allergy sufferer...

Try not to eat one of the top 5 allergens within 2 -3 hours of meeting the food allergy sufferer

Thoroughly wash your hands, mouth and face; you may have residue left over

* Don'ts *

Try not to make the problem obvious. Food allergy sufferers often don't like it when everyone is aware of their health issues, so be sensitive to their situation and act as normal as possible.

What not to say to an allergy sufferer...

I understand how you're feeling.

Real empathy can only be felt by others going through a similar situation. So as much as you would like to think you understand, it's not a good thing to tell someone.

Are you allergic to water too?

Making a joke of the situation isn't the best thing to do.

Just be strong...take control of your body, it's all in your head...

That's one I have heard over and over again. If a person could control their physical reactions through their mental state, people wouldn't have food allergies.

You're just too sensitive!

Again, same as above...

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What you're sick again? Or you're always sick!

Nobody likes to be seen as always being sick. Unfortunately reactions often take much longer to get over than you would think.

It's not a big deal!

It is a very BIG deal! Don't underestimate how much of a person's life it can affect.