Why knowing about food allergies matters



Hospital admissions for severe allergic reactions to food have **more than tripled in the last 20 years** in the UK, with young people most likely to be affected.

Food allergy is the most common cause of potentially life- threatening allergic reactions, accounting for 30 percent of all hospital admissions for anaphylaxis.

People with food allergies are **2 to 4 times more likely** to have another type of allergy such as eczema, asthma or hayfever.



Natasha's story

Natasha's Foundation, the UK's food allergy charity, was founded by Nadim and Tanya Ednan-Laperouse OBEs after their daughter Natasha died aged 15 from an allergic reaction to sesame. Sesame wasn't listed as an ingredient on the packaging of the sandwich she ate.

Had it been, she'd be alive today. Through campaigning, education and clinical research, the Foundation works to improve the lives of the millions of people in the UK with food allergies.

Would you know what to do if someone was having a severe allergic reaction?



Every second counts in a food allergy emergency. Knowing how to respond and the steps you need to take are **essential.**

St John Ambulance

We've teamed up with St John Ambulance to create a short film showing what to do in a food allergy emergency. **Scan this QR code** to watch the film. You can also access step-by-step guidance by scanning the same link >>

Natasha's Foundation
A future without food allergy

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Registered as a Charity in England & Wales No: 1181098; and in Scotland No: SC051610

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

First Aid for Anaphylaxis

Natasha's Foundation Allergy School

Recognise the Signs of Anaphylaxis...

A Airways
- Persistent cough
- Hoarse voice
- Difficulty swallowing
- Swollen tongue

B Breathing
- Difficult or noisy breathing
- Wheeze or persistent cough

C Circulation
- Persistent dizziness
- Pale or floppy
- Suddenly sleepy
- Collapse/unconscious

An allergic reaction can escalate to anaphylaxis which is potentially life-threatening.

Always consider anaphylaxis in a food-allergic person even if there are no signs of a rash, hives or swelling.

Anaphylaxis : Actions to take

If any one or more of the above ABC symptoms are present, take these steps.

1. Administer an Adrenaline Auto Injector (AAI) without delay

Inject the AAI into the top of the outer thigh. If you're in doubt that it is anaphylaxis but one or more ABC symptoms are present, give the AAI, it will not harm them.



2. Dial 999 and say anaphylaxis ('ana-fill-axis')



Stay with the person until the ambulance arrives. DO NOT let them stand up and walk around.

3. The person should lie down immediately

If the person is not already lying down, they should do so, with legs raised if possible. If breathing is difficult, allow them to sit. If they have vomited or feel sick, gently turn them on their side.



4. Inject a second AAI into the outer thigh if there are no signs of improvement after 5 minutes

If there is no sign of life, start CPR immediately until help arrives.

Please learn these steps. This is life-saving information.
You never know when you will need to act in an anaphylaxis emergency.

Natasha's Foundation
A future without food allergy

Empower • Include • Protect
AllergySchool.org.uk

Registered charity England & Wales (1181098) Scotland(SC051610).BasedonBSACland2023MHRAguidance.

Starting University?



Here's what **you** need to know about **food allergies**

Natasha's Foundation
A future without food allergy

Around **one in 17 adults** in the UK - 2.6 million people - has a food allergy.

Food allergies occur when the body's immune system mistakenly identifies a food as a threat and overreacts, triggering an allergic reaction.

Food allergies **more than doubled** between 2008 and 2018.

Young people are more than **twice as likely** to experience a food allergy than older people.

Hospital admissions for severe **allergic reactions to food have trebled** between 1998 and 2018. Over the same time period, the number of cases increased by more than 4 times in under 15s.

Over 5,000 people were admitted to hospital for potentially life-threatening reactions to food in 2022-2023 - **that's equivalent to 13 people per day.**

Whether you live with a food allergy or share accommodation with someone who does, **understanding how to stay safe is essential.**

University life and food allergies

University life is all about **new experiences!** That includes sharing kitchens, meals and social spaces with people who may have food allergies. Here's how **we can all help** keep shared spaces safe while still enjoying life together.

Here, two young people with food allergies share their tips for navigating university:

Talk early, talk often

- Some universities will give you the contact numbers of your flatmates before you start, so you can set up a group chat. This is a great place to **mention your food allergy** before moving in.
- Discuss **what's safe** in the kitchen. For example, not sharing food or utensils and opening windows while cooking.

Be prepared

- Makesureyour **medical ID is up to date** on your phone.
- Always **carry 2 AAIs.** Consider a note on the AAI case listing allergens and emergency phone numbers.
- Have an **action plan** in the event of an allergic reaction to food. Where is the nearest hospital?
- **Register with a local GP.** Some universities have their own campus doctors' surgery which makes life easy!
- Medical alert bracelets and jewellery are available to purchase and can give reassurance.

Keeping the kitchen safe

- If you're allergic to airborne food allergens or gluten, **toaster bags** or separate toasters can make a big difference.
- **Explain** to flatmates what you can and can't have in the kitchen.
- Have your **own sponge** to prevent cross contamination when washing up, and make sure no one else uses it (consider keeping it separate).
- **Label** allergen free food in the fridge with your name to make sure flatmates don't use your safe food by accident.
- **Use lids** on food so crumbs/drips don't fall in.





Nights out and social events

- **Cross-contamination** at bars can happen through shakers, stirrers, and measures. Request your glass be cleaned between drinks if you are unsure.
- Remember that **alcohol and drugs** can affect anaphylactic reactions.
- Allergens can be passed on through **kissing** so make sure you speak to any potential partner.
- Be aware some **alcohol** may contain food allergens. For example, beer contains gluten and some cocktails can contain milk.

Takeaway food and deliveries

- Takeaways and delivered food are a major part of university life Always **call a restaurant** to confirm a food is safe - do not rely on app notes.
- Make sure people you are with **know what to do** in the event of a food allergic reaction.



How to help food allergic flat mates

Have a conversation

- Offer to **discuss** their food allergy before moving-in.
- Check before **borrowing** or using any of their food equipment.
- Keep the conversation **open**, it's easier to ask than guess!
- Respect that speaking up about a food allergy can be difficult; yourunderstanding makes a **big difference!**

Be emergency ready

- **Know the signs** of an allergic reactionandwhat steps to take - use our poster and helpful QR codes on this leaflet for support.
- **Familiarise** yourself with an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI), where the medication is kept and how to use it in an emergency.
- Ask your flatmate to explain their **emergency plan.** Know where the nearest hospitalis and who to call if they have an allergic reaction.
- If they wear a medical alert bracelet or carry a note with food allergens, make sure you **understand** what this means.



Keep the kitchen safe for everyone



- If your flatmate is allergic to airborne food allergens or gluten, consider **toaster bags** or separate toasters.
- Organise a washing up schedule and make sure you thoroughly wash up any pots / pans which may have been in contact with their food allergen.
- Use a **separate sponge** for your dishes and don't use theirs.
- **Respect** their labelled food.
- **Keep lids** on your food to stop crumbs or spills getting into theirs.
- **Don't share jars** (like butter or jam) where knivescan spread allergens.

Going out

- Be mindful of **cross-contamination** when making or sharing drinks (shakers, stirrers).
- If you're ordering food together, help them **check** with restaurants directly that food is safe for them to eat.
- Be mindful of what you eat before close contact allergens can linger in saliva for up to 24 hours and can be passed on through **kissing**.