

# Navigating Food Pantries with Food Allergy



**The mission of a food pantry is to provide healthy, nutritious food for those in need.**

For individuals with food allergy, it can be difficult to find foods that are free of allergens. If you or someone in your family has food allergy, here are things to think about when getting food at a food bank/pantry:

- ✚ Can you discuss your needs with a staff member and find out what safe food options are available?
- ✚ Are you able to review food packaging labels so you can check for allergens you/your family must avoid?
- ✚ Does the food pantry have procedures in place to avoid cross-contact in the food storage area and during preparation of food that may be prepared on site? (Cross-contact is when an allergen accidentally mixes with food that does not have the allergen. When this happens, the “safe” food becomes unsafe.)
- ✚ If food is served and eaten on site, does staff know how to recognize and respond to an allergic reaction?
- ✚ Does the food bank/pantry provide substitutions for common allergens? These may include:
  - cow’s milk alternatives, such as rice, oat, or soy milk
  - cow’s milk-free yogurt and cheese
  - wheat-free grain and pasta
  - peanut butter alternatives, such as sunflower seed butter
  - egg replacements (liquid or powder)
  - healthy snacks, such as nut-free trail mix or protein bars

## Resources

Common allergen substitutions: [foodallergy.org/substitutions](https://www.foodallergy.org/substitutions)

Allergen-friendly recipes: [foodallergy.org/recipes](https://www.foodallergy.org/recipes)

Resources for food bank/pantry staff and clients:

[foodallergy.org/resources/food-banks-and-soup-kitchens](https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/food-banks-and-soup-kitchens)

Find more  
information on  
living safely with  
food allergy at  
[FoodAllergy.org](https://www.FoodAllergy.org).

