



# Tips for Shopping and Eating Away from Home on a Dairy-Free Eating Plan

If you have a milk allergy or intolerance, it is important to stay away from milk and food made with milk products. Here are tips on how to stay dairy-free while shopping and eating away from home.

## Shopping Tips

- Read the ingredient list each time you purchase an item, even if you have purchased it before. Ingredients may change at any time without notification. Different sizes and versions of candies may contain slightly different ingredients.
- Grocery store delis slice various types of deli meats and sometimes even cheese on shared slicers. Choose instead packaged deli meat or ask the deli to slice your order first thing in the morning on a clean machine and set it aside for you to pick up later in the day. Note that lunch meats may contain milk ingredients.
- Kosher-friendly delis will carry meat products without milk ingredients, and they do not use shared equipment for meat and cheese products.
- Nonfood items (including lotions, soaps, cosmetics, sunscreens, medications and pet food) may contain milk ingredients. These products need to be avoided in milk allergy cases where the person reacts to touching a milk ingredient. A person with milk intolerance is fine to use nonfood items without concern.

## Eating Out Tips

- When eating in restaurants, use “chef cards,” available from the Food Allergy Research & Education website (search “food allergy chef cards” at [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)). You can list all the ingredients that should be avoided with the specific allergies on your card. Speak directly to the manager and inform them of the food allergy. Present the chef card and discuss which ingredients to avoid as well as how to avoid cross-contact.
- Avoid complex dishes and desserts with multiple ingredients or sauces as they may have hidden allergens.

- Avoid foods that are fried in a deep-fat fryer that may have been used to fry other foods with milk ingredients.
- Be aware that cross-contact is likely in salad bars and buffets. Serving utensils may be shared, and foods can spill and splash.
- Before going out, look for food allergen information on websites for fast-food and chain restaurants. Be aware that restaurant companies may use multiple food suppliers, and ingredients or recipes may change over time. Always reconfirm that food is safe before ordering.

## Travel Tips

- Pack allergen-free snacks and some staple foods.
- If necessary, request special hotel accommodations such as a room with a refrigerator or kitchenette.
- Investigate restaurants ahead of time and call ahead with special requests. If you are traveling abroad, consider chef cards printed in the destination’s native language.
- Carry extra emergency medications when you travel. Always keep a supply of these medications with you. Lost luggage is a true disaster if it contains emergency medication and the treatment plan.
- Know how to call emergency services at your destination, especially if traveling abroad. Be familiar with the location and distance of local hospitals and urgent care facilities and keep the contact information of local medical professionals handy.
- When traveling by plane:
  - Bring medications in their original packaging and keep them with you at your seat.
  - Pack allergen-free snacks and meals for the trip and include extra food in case there are delays. People with allergies should not eat airline food.
  - Wipe down the plane seat to prevent any potential contact reactions.

*\*Information from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Tips for Managing a Milk Allergy, Page 3-4.*