



Lucian's Food Allergen Safety Checklist

A practical guide for families, schools, caregivers, and food-service teams supporting children with severe food allergies, autism, sensory feeding needs, or complex dietary restrictions.

For families

- Read the label every time, even for foods you have purchased before.
- Confirm the exact allergens your child avoids, including less obvious ingredients, oils, flavors, binders, shared-line risks, and facility statements.
- Look for plain-language allergen statements and avoid vague wording when your child has severe reactions.
- Ask whether the food is made on shared equipment, in a shared kitchen, or near airborne powders, dust, steam, or particles.
- Keep safe backup food available for school, travel, field trips, sports, and emergencies.
- Never rely on a brand reputation alone; verify the current product, current label, and current preparation method.

Important reminder

This checklist is educational and does not replace a physician's advice, an allergy action plan, a 504 plan, IEP accommodations, or emergency medication instructions.

For schools and programs

Use this page with cafeteria teams, teachers, substitutes, after-school programs, transportation staff, event organizers, and administrators.

- Keep the student's food allergy action plan, emergency contacts, and medication instructions accessible to trained staff.
- Create a written meal plan for cafeteria, classroom parties, substitutes, transportation, clubs, and field trips.
- Separate utensils, trays, prep surfaces, serving tools, and gloves when handling allergen-safe meals.
- Avoid food-based classroom rewards unless the family has approved the item in advance.
- Train staff to recognize symptoms, prevent cross-contact, and respond quickly without isolating or shaming the child.
- Document incidents, near misses, ingredient changes, and family communications so safety improves over time.

Shared goal

The child should be protected without being isolated, embarrassed, or excluded from ordinary school life.



Questions to ask before a child eats

Use these prompts when talking with restaurants, cafeterias, manufacturers, teachers, caregivers, event organizers, and after-school programs.

- What ingredients are in the product, including oils, natural flavors, seasonings, and processing aids?
- Is the item made on dedicated equipment or shared equipment? If shared, how is it cleaned and verified?
- Are allergens present elsewhere in the facility, and can dust, steam, or airborne particles be an issue?
- Can you mark the order for food allergies and separate utensils, gloves, packaging, and prep surfaces?
- Who can confirm ingredient changes before the child eats?

Lucian's lived example

For Lucian, safe food access has meant looking beyond marketing claims and asking detailed questions about real ingredients and real preparation. His family has found that one of the only fast-food items he can safely have is In-N-Out french fries, because they are made from real potatoes and cooked in sunflower oil, with allergy communication procedures that help reduce cross-contact risk.

That example matters because it shows what families need everywhere: transparent ingredients, careful procedures, and staff who understand that allergen safety is not a preference. It can be the difference between exclusion and participation.

Quick notes

Child:

Top allergens to avoid:

Safe backup foods:

Emergency plan location: