



Part of our college checklist is deciding whether you want a roommate or a medical single room. After your first year at college, that list of decisions can expand to whether you want to live on or off campus and potentially in a group house.

While every college differs, many colleges will let you pick your own roommate if you prefer not to be assigned one (although that trend is starting to shift). Most new students connect with potential roommates through Facebook, Instagram, GroupMe, and other forms of social media for the college. Using one of these platforms is a great

way to meet people and potentially find a roommate who can agree to keep your room allergen-free – before you ever step through the doors!

If your college assigns roommates – based on interest surveys, personality tests, or even at random – ask for your roommate's contact information so you can discuss food allergies right away. If your roommate is not receptive to keeping the room allergen-friendly or allergen-free, you can request a roommate swap before school starts. (If your college does not want to provide contact information for your roommate, you may need to add that to your accommodations request with the Disability Office.)

Before this process starts, it's important to talk to your board-certified allergist about whether you need allergens to be kept completely out of the room or if it's okay for your roommate to have them, as long as foods are clearly labeled, or your roommate takes other precautions to keep allergens separate from your food and personal items.

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**No matter how you meet or are assigned a roommate, here are some conversation starters to help you bring up the topic of food allergies:**

1. I am allergic to [allergen(s)]. Would you be okay not keeping this in the dorm room if we live together?
2. You seem so fun! I would love to room together, but I did want to let you know that I have food allergies. We wouldn't be able to have [allergen(s)] in the room. Is that going to be okay with you?
3. I am looking for someone to room with and it seems like we have a lot in common! I wanted to let you know that I have food allergies. That means if we room together, we can't keep [allergen(s)] in our space. Would that work out with you?
4. I am so excited to room together! I wanted to let you know right away that I have food allergies. We wouldn't be able to have [allergen(s)] in the room. Is that going to be okay with you?
5. Looks like we have been paired as roommates! I am so excited! I did want to let you know right off the bat that I am allergic to [allergen(s)]. It's okay to have them in the room, but we'd need to make sure we keep those foods separate from anything I might be eating. Can you work with that?

Your roommate does not have to become your best friend (although it's great if they do!) but they do have to agree to keep your living quarters safe. If they do not think they can live without allergens in the room, don't get down on yourself – the issue is with them, not you. Move on to another candidate. You will find the right roommate for you!

**Bonus questions to ask a potential roommate:**

- Will they be willing to learn how to use an epinephrine auto-injector?

NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_

- Will they make sure their friends don't bring allergens into the room when you are not there?

NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_

- Will they agree to not share silverware/mugs with you (or be willing to be diligent about cleaning shared items)?

NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_

- Would they be willing to carry a copy of your [Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan](#) in case they need to help you in an emergency?

NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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