



Disaster Preparedness

at College

With Food Allergies

Natural disasters can strike anywhere—even at college. Although your campus will have safety and disaster management plans in place - including an administrative team focused on campus safety and disaster management - be sure to schedule time for a conversation with that team prior to the start of the school year. During a crisis, communication may be difficult so having a plan in place beforehand will help eliminate any confusion. It is important for you, as the student, to take extra steps to ensure the proper management of allergen-safe food and your health during a disaster.

Important note: Do not rely on others for food safety during a disaster—they may be distracted and not focused on food allergy management. You are the expert regarding your safe foods.

Three Easy Steps To Prepare for a Natural Disaster on Campus

1. Create a Go/Stay Bag

- A Go/Stay-Bag contains everything you need in case you must leave quickly (Go) or shelter in place (Stay). This bag should include allergy-safe food, bottled water, medications, a printed list of emergency contacts, eyewear or contact lenses, allergen-safe personal hygiene products, and anything else you may need. With limited space in a dorm room or small college apartment, FAACT has created a combined Go/Stay Bag list to make it easier for college students.
- A backpack, duffel, or any bag that has a zipper so contents will not fall out works best. The Go/Stay bag should contain items that you will need to get through the next 72 hours if Dining Services is closed, you lose electricity, or you need to leave quickly.
- Stock up on shelf-stable foods that you know are safe. (This is not the time to try new foods!)
- Check expiration dates and swap out the contents of your Go/Stay Bag for fresh items at the beginning of every school year.

2. Speak to the Office of Disabilities

- The Office of Disabilities is knowledgeable about potential food allergy and emergency accommodations. Questions to consider asking:
 - a) Does the college have a plan for feeding students with special diets during a natural disaster?
 - b) How should I communicate with Dining Services during a disaster, if meals are provided?
 - c) How will I be identified as a student with food allergies and served safe foods?
- Most colleges use a campus safety app or text/phone/email system to communicate with students during an emergency. Ensure you understand how to use this system.
- Download local apps about disaster preparedness or safety information.

3. Manage Your Medications

- Replace medications before they expire.
- If possible, keep extra epinephrine devices and other needed medications in your Go/Stay Bag.
- Always carry two epinephrine devices with you. You may not be able to return to your dorm room during a disaster.

Although disasters are rare, college campuses are prepared to keep students physically safe. **It is up to you to manage your food allergies and have access to safe food during a disaster.**

Disaster Preparedness *at College* with Food Allergies (page 2)

College Go/Stay-Bags

Being prepared to manage your food allergies during a disaster is critical because access to safe foods might be limited. Follow these tips to create your Go/Stay Bag today.

What To Pack and Why

During a natural disaster, you may have to leave campus and stay somewhere unfamiliar.

Here are some things to consider when creating your Go/Stay Bag:

- You may be without power, WiFi, or access to dining halls or restaurants.
- If a disaster is imminent—such as a wildfire, flood, or snowstorm—keep electronic devices and battery back-ups fully charged at all times.
- If you can only store a few items in your Go/Stay Bag, prioritize medications, foods, a printed [Emergency Contact List](#), and your [Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan](#).
- Just in case your Smartphone isn't working make sure to have some cash on hand.
- Create a Go/Stay Bag that works for you! Think about what is important and what you might need that fits within your budget. There are economical options at many discount stores.

Type of Bag

- Choose a duffle bag (rolling if possible), backpack, zippered, or grocery-style bag, preferably with straps for easy carrying.
- If a prepacked bag won't work in the space you have available, consider a box with handles or stock a shelf or drawer with a bag nearby so you can quickly get contents into the bag and go.

Contact List

- Printed or hand-written contact lists are critical, especially if your phone can't be charged. Keep lists in multiple places (e.g., your Go/Stay Bag, car, backpack).
- Visit [FAACT's Disaster Relief Resource Center](#) for suggestions on who to include on your contact list.

Allergen-Safe Foods

- Choose shelf-stable foods that can stay in your Go/Stay bag for at least the 8 to 9 months that you are at school (check expiration dates).
- Pick foods that can replace a meal, such as a combination of protein, fat, and carbohydrates. These might include:
 - o Soy or sunflower seed butters; nut butters (if you are not allergic to them).
 - Note: some butters are sold in individual serving sized packages online.
 - o Canned or packaged fish, chicken, or other meats
 - o Meat sticks or jerky
 - o Protein bars
 - o Canned fruits and a non-electric can opener
 - o Dried fruit snacks
 - o Allergen-safe granola
 - o Crackers
 - o Shelf-stable canned or boxed juices, milks, or protein drinks
- Confirm that each item does not have cross-contact risks. Call manufacturers if necessary.
- Choose foods that you have previously eaten and enjoy.
- Include bottled water in a size that you can carry and additional water to use if you need to shelter in place.

Disaster Preparedness *at College* with Food Allergies (page 3)

Note: Speak to your college Emergency Response Team to understand how much water you should store in your room. Dorm rooms can be small, and the school might have water and other essential items already stored in the dorm for students.

Supplies

- Pack cash in small denominations in case your phone isn't working or stores are unable to process electronic payments.
- Can opener (non-electric)
- Disposable forks, knives, or spoons (you may not be able to wash items to reuse)
- Disposable plates and bowls
- Ziploc bags
- Heavy-duty garbage bags (for trash or to move dorm items quickly, if needed)
- Small cutting board and knife
- Flashlight (to preserve your phone's power) with working batteries
- Personal hygiene products, including allergen-safe toothpaste, a toothbrush, feminine products, soap, hand wipes, hand sanitizer, and deodorant
- A change of clothes and sturdy shoes
- Local maps to help you navigate if you need to evacuate or find alternative routes and online apps are not available.
- Eyewear or contacts with cleaning/storage solutions
- Whistle (to signal for help in case you become trapped or lost)
- Multi-tool or utility knife
- Disposable emergency blanket (often made from Mylar, so they look metallic)



Medications

- Epinephrine devices
- Prescriptions
- Over-the-counter medications taken daily or as needed
- Copy of your health insurance card

Electronics

- Powerful portable power bank for phones and other electronic devices
- Extra plug-in chargers and cords
- Radio and batteries

Communication

- Download any app your school will use in an emergency and ensure you understand your college's system for communication during emergencies.
- Keep your printed or hand-written contact list up to date.
- Establish a family and friend phone tree. Designate one family member who can share information on your behalf to cut down on your phone use. For example, ask a parent/caregiver or relative to call siblings and close friends to let them know you are okay.

Now, take a deep breath and know you've got this!