



Tips on Dietary Restrictions

Facts on Dietary Restrictions, Food Allergies, and Food Intolerances:

- **Dietary Restrictions** will convey that they are vegetarian or vegan and will expect you to provide a meal that meets his or her dietary needs. Vegan – A plant-based diet with no animal products. They do not eat meat, fish, eggs, or dairy products.
- **Food Allergies** cause an immune system reaction that affects numerous organs in the body. It can cause a range of symptoms. In some cases, an allergic food reaction can be severe or life-threatening.
- **Food Intolerances** symptoms are generally less serious and often limited to digestive problems.

One of the great practices in most Lions clubs is having a meal together. Anybody who works in a restaurant or food business including caterers are very aware that food preferences and eating practices are more and more complicated and diverse. We often have guest speakers or members that have distinct dietary needs and to include them in our organization also means that we need to try and be aware of those needs.

I have listed a few in this example that are more common. This is not meant as comprehensive or as a guide but just to show that when we do meal planning either by ourselves as a club or with a caterer if you know ahead that there are members or guests who have restrictions we can accommodate and include them.

Common questions I have heard are,” What does it mean to be vegetarian or vegan?” Isn’t this the same thing?

Vegetarianism is the practice of abstaining from the consumption of meat (red meat, poultry, seafood, and the flesh of any other animal, and may also include abstention from by-products of animals processed for food. Some vegetarians also exclude dairy, some do not, and some may consume eggs.

Vegans avoid meat, poultry, and seafood, but take it one step further by eliminating all animal products from their diet. This includes any type of animal milk and eggs. Vegans avoid foods produced using animals or animal product in any way, including honey. Many vegans avoid household products, clothing, or other items made from animal products or tested on animals.

Gluten free diet is a diet that strictly excludes gluten, which is a mixture of proteins found in wheat, as well as barley, rye, and oats. There are lists of foods online that are gluten free.

Food allergies and **Intolerances** are also common and on the rise. A food allergy can cause minor reactions or severe anaphylactic reactions. People with severe food allergies and who are aware that they have those allergies often carry epinephrine injection pens with them.

As you have a new member or guest that will be dining with you it is always a good thing to ask if they have any food allergies. These are just a few examples but just gives an example of what a club should be asking.

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