

Raising the Bar on Allergen Safety

*UMD's Partnership with MenuTrinfo®
Sets a New Standard in Inclusive
Campus Dining*



In 2020, the University of Maryland (UMD) faced a critical food incident that exposed gaps in its ability to safely accommodate students with food allergies. Determined to do more for their students, faculty, employees, and their families, the university partnered with MenuTrinfo® to implement comprehensive changes to improve food allergen safety.

UMD began by enrolling its 251 North Dining Hall's Purple Zone kitchen in MenuTrinfo's Certified Free From® (CFF) program. The Purple Zone is a dedicated meal preparation space, separate from the dining hall's main serving areas. Certification under this program signifies that the space is free from the top nine allergens.

MenuTrinfo's CFF program, accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) National Accreditation Board (ANAB), adheres to the rigorous ISO 17065 standards for certifying bodies. To earn certification, all areas of production are inspected to ensure protocols are in place to prevent cross-contact.

This certification was particularly important for 251 North, as all allergy-friendly meals are freshly prepared in the Purple Zone. Executive Allergen Sous Chef Chris Inboden leads recipe development, ensuring menus remain innovative, appealing, and inclusive.

"The Certified Free From program was a crucial step for us in ensuring the highest standards of food safety and allergen management were being met. It took us a year to get that space certified and we continue to get it recertified year after year," said Sister Maureen Schrimpe, IHM, Nutritionist/Quality Coordinator, University of Maryland.

As part of a broader initiative, nearly 300 members of the university's dining services team—including kitchen managers and nutrition students—completed MenuTrinfo's ANAB-accredited AllerTrain® program. This training equips staff with best practices for preventing cross-contact, preparing allergen-safe meals, and responding effectively in the event of an incident.



“Training our employees was a great step because we believe that empowering them with the right knowledge is key to creating a safe and inclusive dining environment,” said Schrimpe. “Through AllerTrain, we equipped our teams with the skills they needed to confidently manage allergens and prioritize the health and safety of our students.”

A Comprehensive Approach to Allergen Safety with MenuTrinfo®

UMD also implemented MenuTrinfo’s AllerCheck™ program at its Gluten-Free Good Food station in the Yahentamitsi South Campus Dining Hall, which serves the majority of students on campus. AllerCheck alongside CFF and AllerTrain was the third leg of a three-pronged approach UMD took to create long-lasting change for its students with food allergies and other food intolerances.

The AllerCheck certificate confirms a dining center and its staff follows the proper processes and procedures to minimize the risks of cross-contact and serves menu items prepared with verified ingredients. Like the CFF certification, AllerCheck requires institutions to meet stringent criteria—ranging from critical to minor—to earn certification.

“The certificate for the Gluten Free Good Food station at Yahentamitsi reinforces our commitment to the health and well-being of our community, and demonstrates our dedication to

providing a safe and transparent dining experience for everyone,” Schrimpe said. “A majority of our students eat at Yahentamitsi so going through the AllerCheck program for our Gluten Free Good Food station means our students with allergies or food intolerances can safely eat meals prepared there.”

National Recognition for a Model Program

UMD’s proactive efforts culminated in national recognition. In 2024, the university received MenuTrinfo’s National Allergy Award for Best Overall Dining Program for Universities. This honor reflects UMD’s leadership in setting a new benchmark for safe, inclusive campus dining.

“The University of Maryland came to us during a pivotal moment,” said Betsy Craig, CEO of MenuTrinfo. “Their unwavering commitment to creating a safe, transparent environment for students with allergies and food intolerances has set the gold standard in allergen and nutrition services. Their achievement is a testament to the lasting impact of their dedication to student well-being and dining excellence.”

