

Food servers more vulnerable to legal threats

January 18 2013, by Mary Clare Jalonick

People with severe food allergies have a new tool in their effort to find menus that fit their diet: federal disabilities law. And that could leave schools, restaurants and anyone else that serves food more vulnerable to legal challenges over food sensitivities.

A settlement stemming from a lack of gluten-free foods for students at a Massachusetts university could serve as a precedent for people with other allergies or conditions, including peanut sensitivities or diabetes.

Institutions and businesses subject to the Americans With Disabilities Act could be open to lawsuits if they fail to honor requests for accommodations by people with food allergies.

The settlement, reached last month but drawing little attention, will require Lesley University to serve gluten-free foods and make other accommodations for students who have [celiac disease](#).

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Citation: Food servers more vulnerable to legal threats (2013, January 18) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-food-servers-vulnerable-legal-threats.html>

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