

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: MEDICAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

A GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE STUDENTS LIVING WITH AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES AND OTHER CHRONIC ILLNESSES

What Are Medical Accommodations?

Medical accommodations are **adjustments or support** provided by your school to help you fully participate in your education—even when health issues get in the way. Whether you have an autoimmune disease, a food allergy, a mental health condition, or another chronic illness, you may qualify for accommodations that make learning more accessible and safe.

What Does the Law Say?

High School (K–12):

Your rights are protected under:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

College & University:

Your rights are protected under:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

What Documentation Do You Need?

To request accommodations, you'll usually need:

- A **diagnosis** from a qualified medical provider
- Documentation describing how your condition affects your **ability to learn or participate**
- A provider's recommendation for specific accommodations (many schools have a form for this)

TIP: Start early! Contact your school's disability services to learn about their process and deadlines.

Examples of Common Accommodations

In High School:

- Extended time on tests and assignments
- Modified class schedules
- Excused absences for medical needs
- Ability to leave class for breaks or medication
- Homebound or virtual instruction options
- Elevator access or seating near exits

In College:

- Flexible attendance or deadline policies
- Note-taking help or recorded lectures
- Extended time on exams
- Reduced course loads
- Housing accommodations (e.g. private room, air conditioning)
- Priority registration

Food-Related Accommodations:

Students with celiac disease, food allergies, or other medical dietary needs can request accommodations such as:

- Access to **gluten-free**, **dairy-free**, or allergen-free meals in school cafeterias
- Permission to **bring and store personal food** on campus
- Access to **kitchen facilities** or meal plan exemptions
- **Labeling of allergens** in dining areas
- Safe food handling procedures and staff training

TIP: Work with both **Disability Services** and **Dining Services** to ensure your dietary needs are met safely and consistently.



How to Get Started

For High School:

1. Speak with your school counselor or 504/IEP coordinator
2. Submit medical documentation
3. Attend a meeting with your family and school staff
4. Review and update your plan as needed

For College:

1. Contact the [Disability or Accessibility Services Office](#)
2. Submit the intake form and documentation
3. Meet with a coordinator to determine accommodations
4. Work with professors and dining/housing as needed

You're Not Alone

Needing accommodations—academic, medical, or dietary—means you're advocating for what you need to succeed. You deserve to feel supported, safe, and empowered in your education.

Learn more:

- ADA.gov
- Understood.org
- Your school's Disability Services or Student Support website

This guide is for informational purposes and does not replace legal or medical advice.