

ALLERGY AWARE

An Allergen Management Guide for Businesses



Food allergy and intolerance – the facts

- Between 1-2% of adults and 5-8% of children in the UK have a food allergy.
- Tragically about 10 people a year die from food induced anaphylaxis in the UK.
- A food allergy is when your immune system mistakes the protein in food as a threat.
- A food allergen is any substance, consumed or inhaled, that causes a reaction of the immune system.
- There is no cure for food allergies. The only way to manage it is to strictly avoid food that triggers the body's immune response. The smallest trace of an allergen could cause a fatal reaction.
- Symptoms of an allergic reaction can be mild, moderate or severe.
- Anaphylaxis is the most severe allergic reaction. It is potentially life-threatening and requires immediate medical treatment. If you think someone is experiencing anaphylaxis dial 999 and ask for an ambulance as soon as possible.
- Food intolerance is not the same as a food allergy. Most do not involve the immune system and are generally not life threatening. Intolerance is a difficulty digesting certain foods and having an unpleasant physical reaction to them.
- Coeliac Disease is an autoimmune condition caused by a reaction to gluten, a dietary protein found in cereals such as wheat, barley and rye. The body's immune system attacks the small intestines and reduces its ability to absorb nutrients from food.
- Customers with food intolerance and Coeliac Disease should be treated with the same caution as someone who has a food allergy. Failure to do so could make someone very ill or affect their long-term health.

Legal requirements for businesses

- Food businesses have a legal duty to provide information about the presence of 14 allergens required to be declared by law which are in the food or drink they sell. These 14 allergens are listed on the accompanying page of this document.
- Any food produced or prepared for consumers must be SAFE.
- If you tell a customer food is 'free from' a specified allergen and it is not, you have supplied UNSAFE food. This applies whether the allergen is one of the 14 allergens required to be declared by law or not.
- Food must be accurately described and food descriptions must not be false or misleading.
- Supplying unsafe food or making false or misleading statements about food in the course of a food business is a criminal offence.
- Prepacked Food: which is fully or partially enclosed by packaging so that the food cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging must have full labelling; including the name of the food and a full ingredients list with any allergens listed being emphasised each and every time that they are mentioned.
- Since 2021, food allergen labelling is required on food Prepacked for Direct Sale (PPDS). PPDS is food which is packaged at the same place where it is offered to consumers and in packaging before being ordered or selected e.g. sandwiches, salads, other foods. Labels must declare the name of the food and a full list of ingredients. If any of the 14 allergens are present in the food, they must be emphasised in the ingredients list.
- Non-Prepacked Food: allergen information can be provided in writing (best practice) or verbally.
- Where food allergen information is communicated verbally, a food business must display a written notice placed in a clearly visible position explaining how your customers can obtain this information.
- Food businesses selling food at a distance, such as internet and telephone sales, are legally required to ensure that food allergen information is available to consumers both before the order is placed and at the point of delivery to the customer.

What can happen if businesses get it wrong?

Prosecution, fines, prison, poor reputation, loss of business, and so on. Here are some examples...

Restaurant owner jailed for six years over death of peanut allergy customer

Paul Wilson died after Mohammed Zaman swapped almond powder for a cheaper one containing peanuts.



MILK



NUTS



SULPHUR DIOXIDE



SESAME SEEDS



MOLLUSCS

The Artichoke, Croxley Green, has been fined £23,000 after being prosecuted by Hertfordshire Trading Standards when one of its customers became seriously ill.

TAKEAWAY WORKERS FOUND GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER AFTER NUT ALLERGY DEATH

Megan Lee, 15, who was allergic to peanuts, died after eating a kebab and naan from a Lancashire restaurant.

Allergen to do checklist for businesses

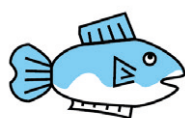
- ✓ Implement a documented food safety management system e.g. Safer Food Better Business (SFBB). Fill in the blank boxes in the allergens "safe method" for your business. Train your staff in your SFBB and supervise your team until you know your safe methods are being followed.
- ✓ Have allergen management procedures in place from back to front of house including storage, preparation and service areas.
- ✓ Identify and record the presence of the 14 prescribed food allergens in all food and drink you supply. Include 'May Contain' ingredients. Where necessary, obtain written allergen information from your suppliers. Use the allergen matrix attached to do this. www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses
- ✓ Review and update food allergen information and your matrix regularly as ingredients may change if you receive a product substitute, change supplier, change a specification/recipe or change your menu. Make sure staff use the same recipe and change the allergen matrix sheet to reflect when recipes or ingredients change. We advise double checking packaging if a customer asks about a specific food product.
- ✓ Use a sign requesting customers ask about allergens, display this in a prominent place where customers make their food choices. See www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/Allergen%20and%20Intolerance%20sign%20%28Colour%29.pdf to download this. You could also have a statement on your website, on printed menus and flyers to inform customers how to obtain allergen information for your dishes.
- ✓ Have an Emergency Action Plan in place so staff know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ Train all staff to be Allergy Aware - record their training. Update staff when allergen information changes.
- ✓ Have a dedicated member of staff on each shift who has overall responsibility for allergen management and who can talk to customers about food allergies.
- ✓ Manage cross contamination risks when preparing, cooking and serving food. Only use precautionary allergen statements if you have carried out a meaningful risk assessment and it is not possible to guarantee there will be no allergen cross contamination.
- ✓ Store ingredients securely. Allergen free ingredients should be stored separately and preferably at a higher level than those containing allergens. If you transfer ingredients from their original packaging, you must have a way of identifying the allergens present in the product. Be aware of air borne allergens such as flour. Clean up spillages immediately.
- ✓ Always ask customers if they have an allergy or intolerance before taking an order for food. Accurately record allergen-free food orders and effectively communicate them to the chef. Do not cater for a customer with a food allergy or intolerance if you cannot do this safely.
- ✓ Have a 'no guessing' rule. Staff should never guess the answer to a question about allergens.



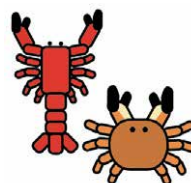
GLUTEN



EGGS



FISH



CRUSTACEANS



PEANUTS

When preparing allergen-free meals

- ✔ Use clean equipment and utensils which are used solely for that dish.
- ✔ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water when preparing allergen-free meals.
- ✔ When an order comes in from an allergic customer, have a clear process in place to ensure that the food can be safely prepared and served to the correct customer.
- ✔ Be aware of the allergens in garnishes, toppings, sauces or dressings so that you can avoid using them.
- ✔ Clean kitchen surfaces regularly so that there is no visible food debris or crumbs from other meals.
- ✔ Communicate cross-contamination risks to customers with an allergy or intolerance.
- ✔ Take care and have set procedures when using coffee machines for “free from” customers, including using separate equipment e.g. jugs, cleaning cloths, wands. Clean and disinfect equipment before use, consider syrups and garnishes. Consider offering “free from” milks cold or heated via an alternative method e.g. microwave, to reduce risk of cross contamination. Some syrups and sprinkles used in coffees have “may contain” allergen statements. This information must be passed onto your customers verbally and/or in written information e.g. allergen matrices.

Online/delivery of food

- ✔ Make sure your online allergen information is clear, accurate and easily accessible at the point when customers order food.
- ✔ If you provide food via an online ordering site, follow their requirements for providing allergen information.
- ✔ Remove possible cross-contamination risks during the delivery of the order from your business to the customer.
- ✔ When the order is delivered to the customer, make it clear which is the allergen-free meal. You can use stickers or a note on the container in permanent marker to label each meal.



For more information, please visit the Food Standards Agency webpage on Allergen guidance for food businesses at

🌐 www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses

To contact our food team please email ✉ foodandhealth@southglos.gov.uk or visit our Food safety webpage at Food safety | BETA - South Gloucestershire Council (🌐 southglos.gov.uk)



MILK



SOYA



LUPIN



CELERY