

## 9.1 Allergens SOP

### Food Allergens



#### What is a food allergy?

Food allergy is a reaction caused when the body's immune system reacts unusually to components in foods, usually specific proteins. Symptoms include tingling in the mouth, itchy skin rash, swelling of the face or mouth, shortness of breath, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. Some people may develop anaphylaxis which may lead to a severe or even life-threatening reaction, where symptoms may additionally include vomiting, breathing difficulties and a dramatic fall in blood pressure leading to unconsciousness and even death.

## The 14 Food Allergens

In the UK, food businesses must inform customers under food law if they use any of the 14 allergens as ingredients in the food and drink they provide. This includes brought in condiments/sauces etc.

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| <b>Celery</b><br>                    | This includes celery stalks, leaves, spice and celery salt. It is often found in salads, some meat products, soups and stock cubes. People with a celery allergy also need to avoid celeriac, as they are varieties of the same species.                                             |
| <b>Cereals containing gluten</b><br> | Gluten is the name of a family of proteins found in wheat, barley, rye and oats. It is often found in foods containing flour and therefore bread, baked goods, cereals and pasta. It can also be found in barley-based products such as beer, malt, malt vinegar and food colouring. |
| <b>Crustaceans</b><br>              | These include crabs, lobsters, prawns, crabs and scampi. They are often found in shrimp paste used for curries.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Eggs</b><br>                    | These are often found in cakes, some meat products, mayonnaise, mousses, pasta, quiche and food brushed with egg.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Fish</b><br>                    | Often found in fish sauces, pizzas, relishes, salad dressings and stock cubes. Fish and shellfish allergies are one of the most common allergies in adults, and can develop at any point in life with no previous symptoms experienced when eating fish.                             |
| <b>Lupin</b><br>                   | This includes lupin seeds and flour and can be found in some types of bread, pastries and pasta.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Milk</b><br>                    | This is found in butter, cheese, cream, milk powders, yoghurt and foods glazed with milk. Milk and milk powder can be used as coatings i.e on chicken and chips.                                                                                                                     |

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| <p><b>Molluscs</b></p>           | <p>These include mussels, land snails, squid and whelks. They are often found in oyster sauce or as an ingredient in fish stews.</p>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Mustard</b></p>            | <p>This includes mustard powder, liquid mustard and mustard seeds. It is often found in breads, curries, marinades, meat products, salad dressing, sauces and soups.</p>                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><b>Peanuts</b></p>            | <p>Also known as Groundnuts, monkey nuts, arachide, arachis oil, beer nuts, cacahuete, earth nuts, goober nuts/peas, mondalona nuts. These can be found in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts and sauces.</p>                                                                                             |
| <p><b>Tree nuts</b></p>         | <p>These include almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio nuts, macadamia or Queensland nuts. They can be found in breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, ice cream, marzipan, nut oils and sauces. Ground, crushed or flaked almonds are often used in Asian cooking.</p> |
| <p><b>Sesame</b></p>           | <p>These can be found in bread, bread sticks, as a garnish, in hummus, sesame oil and tahini (sesame paste).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>Soybeans</b></p>         | <p>This can be found in bean curd, edamame seeds, miso paste, soya protein, soya flour, tofu and a very wide range of processed foods. It is often used in some desserts, ice cream, meat products, sauces and in vegetarian products.</p>                                                                |
| <p><b>Sulphur dioxide</b></p>  | <p>Sulphites are preservatives, used in dried fruit, meat products and vegetables as well as in wine and beer. Sulphur dioxide allergy is rare however sulphites can cause allergy-like symptoms in people with underlying conditions such as asthma.</p>                                                 |

Note: these are the 14 allergens referred in UK law but there are other allergens which are less common, so take care when customers make you aware of their particular allergies.

## Use of 'May contain ...' statement

Use of a 'may contain....' statement, or similar, to indicate that the product may contain an allergen as a result of possible cross-contamination, must not take the place of good manufacturing practices (GMPs) in a food business.

## Controlling allergen cross contamination

Allergen cross-contamination can happen unintentionally when there is a risk that the allergen has entered the product accidentally during the production process. This can sometimes happen when several food products are made on the same premises. Many food safety controls in place for other risks are also effective for food allergens.

Allergen segregation is possible by:

- Effective cleaning, washing up and hand washing using hot water, cleaning and sanitising products.
- Physical separation – putting a lid or cover on food, using a clean knife, board, plate, pan, working area, aprons.
- Using separate fryers/cooking equipment/tongs.
- Checking that packaging is clean and allergen spillage carefully managed.
- Careful management of dishwashing equipment – correct temperatures, products and cleaning.
- Using the same cooking oil.



## Allergen information and labelling

There are a number of ways in which allergen information can be provided to your customers. You will need to choose the method which is best for your business and the type of food you serve.

Allergen information can be supplied on the menu, chalk boards, tickets or provided face-to-face. If provided in this way, make it clear that the information can be obtained by asking a member of staff by means of a notice, statement on the menu, ticket or label that can easily be seen by customers, as well as in other formats made available to the consumer e.g. on website, on an events booking form providing the customer has been made aware that the information is available. The notice must be clear and conspicuous, not hidden away and easily visible and legible.

For takeaways, the mandatory allergen information must be made available at point of order and delivery. Allergen information must be specific to the food, complete and accurate. Inaccurate or incomplete information about allergenic ingredients used in foods sold non-pre-packed (or pre-packed for direct sale) would be a breach of the regulations and could result in penalties.

## **Allergic reaction:** Emergency protocol for anaphylaxis

If someone is finding it hard to breathe, if their lips or mouth are swollen, or if they collapse, you should:

- Lie the person down and raise their legs – unless they're having breathing difficulties and need to sit up to help them breathe. If they're pregnant lie them down on their left side
- Call 999 immediately and state "Anaphylaxis".
- Check if the customer has an adrenaline auto-injector and can self-administer into their thigh.
- Unless you have received specific training in its correct use, do not administer the auto-injector. The customer may have a family member or friend who can help
- Send someone outside to wait for the ambulance, and stay with the person until qualified help arrives.

## **What is PPDS food?**

Food that is packed before being offered for sale by the same food business to the final consumer:

- on the same premises; or
- on the same site\*; or
- on other premises

If the food is offered for sale from a moveable and/or temporary premises (such as marquees, market stalls, mobile sales vehicles) if the food is offered for sale by the same food business who packed it.

It does not include food packed at a consumer's request, food not in packaging, or food in packaging that can be altered without opening or changing the packaging.

## **Further information**

Allergen eLearning training is also available from the Food Standards Agency:

<http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/english/>