

ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT

Why is it important to manage allergens?

When someone has a food allergy, their immune system reacts to a particular food as if it is not safe. A severe food allergy can cause a life-threatening reaction. Food intolerance, however, does not involve the immune system and is not generally life-threatening.

It is important that you and your staff are aware of the composition of the foods you sell to enable you to cater for customers with food allergies and intolerances.

How do I do this?

Food businesses need to understand their own processes and products and identify, manage and communicate allergen risks to their staff and customers who have allergies to certain foods. Allergen management can easily be done in three steps:

- **Step 1 – Identify Allergens in your Business**
- **Step 2 – Manage Allergen Risks**
- **Step 3 – Communicate with your Staff and Customers**

STEP 1: IDENTIFY ALLERGENS IN YOUR BUSINESS

What are the most common foods which can cause an allergic reaction?

The table below lists the most common allergens and provides examples of foods which typically contain them (Please note this list is not exhaustive):

Allergen	Examples of typical foods which contain this Allergen
Cereals containing Gluten e.g. wheat, rye, barley, oats	Bread, pasta, cakes, pastry, sauces, soups, batter, stock cubes, breadcrumbs, semolina, couscous, some meat products.
Celery and Celeriac e.g. stalks, seeds and leaves	Salads, soups, celery salt, some meat products.
Eggs	Cakes, sauces, pasta, mayonnaise, some meat products, glazed products.
Fish, Crustaceans and Molluscs e.g. all fish, prawns, lobster, crab, clams, langoustines, mussels, oysters, squid	Some salad dressings, fish extracts, oils and paste, Soy and Worcestershire sauces, relishes.
Milk	Milk powder, yoghurt, butter, cheese, cream, ghee, foods glazed with milk, ice cream.
Mustard	Mustard paste, seeds, leaves, flour, powder and liquid mustard, salad dressings, marinades, soups, sauces, curries, some meat products.
Peanuts	Arachis oil, peanut butter, flour, satay sauce, refined peanut oil.
Other Nuts e.g. walnuts, cashews, pecan, Brazil, pistachio, macadamia, Queensland nuts	In sauces, desserts, bread, crackers, ice cream, praline (hazelnut), nut butters, essences and oils, marzipan and frangipane (almond), pesto, nut salad dressings.
Sesame Seeds	Oil or paste, tahini, houmous, halva, furikake, Gomashio, bread.
Soya e.g. flour, tofu or beancurd, textured soya protein, soy sauce, edamame beans.	Some ice cream, sauces, desserts, meat products, vegetarian products.
Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphites	Some meat products, stock cubes, bouillon mix, fruit juice drinks, dried fruit/vegetables, wine, beer, cider.
Lupin Seeds and Flour	Some types of bread and pastries.

STEP 2: MANAGE ALLERGEN RISKS

How do I manage the allergens risk?

This can be done by adapting the following guidance for your business.

Deliveries and Labels

- Check that the food delivered matches your order – if it does not match, check the ingredient list of the replacement product. Never accept a delivery without it being fully labelled with an ingredient list
- Be aware of hidden ingredients, for example, nuts used in the base of a cheesecake
- Any foods whose ingredients are unknown to you, or you are unsure about, will require further investigation before the allergen status of that food can be verified
- Storage and avoiding Cross Contamination
- Store foods that contain allergens separate from other foods and consider using clearly marked or colour-coded containers
- Store foods that contain allergens in powdered form such as milk powder or flour in air-tight containers
- Do not lose the original product description following unpacking, decanting and storage
- Keep a record of all foods and ingredients purchased by you to ensure traceability
- Put in place steps to prevent cross contamination between foods that contain allergens and those foods that do not. Remember! Minute traces of foods which contain allergens can get into other foods and cause a reaction

Preparing Dishes

- Know ALL the ingredients in the food you handle to ensure you provide accurate allergen advice to customers
- Whenever preparing or serving food for an allergy sufferer, always :
 - Use a separate area to prepare the food
 - Clean and disinfect the work surface, equipment and serving utensils first
 - Wash your hands thoroughly
 - Check all ingredients including secondary ones, for example, thickeners for sauces
 - Do not cook food in oil in which you have cooked other foods
 - Do not remove allergenic ingredients, such as nuts, from a dish and call it allergy-free because residues of the allergenic ingredient may remain in the dish and may still cause a reaction
 - When displaying food in buffets or display cabinets, always lay out dishes in a way that will minimise the risk of allergen-free food being contaminated with ingredients from another dish and provide separate serving utensils

STEP 3: COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR STAFF AND CUSTOMERS

The last step in allergen management is to ensure that your customers are informed of the presence of allergens and the controls in place. This can be done by training your staff in allergy awareness and by using clear menu descriptions.

Staff Training

- Train all your staff (food handlers, service staff and staff taking orders by phone) in allergy awareness
 - Allergy e-learning training: <http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>
 - [Allergy Poster](#)
- Make sure that all staff understand that they should never guess whether or not an allergen is present in a food. They should ask someone who knows. Always be honest with the customer. If you do not know, admit it!
- Ensure kitchen staff inform the service staff of any last minute recipe changes

Communicating with your Customers

Let your customers with allergies know that you are allergy-aware and give advice on which foods to avoid.

- [Allergen Signage](#)

Where possible, design your menu to ensure names and descriptions of dishes reflect potential allergenic ingredients, for example, “strawberry mousse with almond shortbread” or “satay sauce made with peanuts”.

What to do in the event of an emergency

Call the emergency services (999) immediately if you suspect a customer is having an allergic reaction. Send someone to meet the ambulance crew and remain with the customer in the meantime.

REMEMBER!

- Never guess ingredients in a food - always check!

RECORDS

- Write down how you will control allergens and cross contamination in your business
 - Allergen Management Procedures Record (next page)
- Make a record of dishes that contain any of the 14 allergens
 - Download - [Chef's allergen menu matrix](#)
- Record staff training on allergens on the training record found in the management section of Safer Food Better Business.
 - Download- [SFBB training record sheet](#)
- Use the Safer Food Better Business diary sheets to record the monitoring that you carry out and if you find that your Allergen Management procedures are not being followed, make a record of the problem you have identified and the action you have taken to correct it.
 - Download- [SFBB diary sheet](#)

ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

	Describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Control Measures and Critical Limits ▪ Monitoring including frequency
Deliveries and labels	
Storage and avoiding cross contamination	
Preparing dishes	
Staff Training	
Communicating with your customers	
What to do in the event of an emergency	
Monitoring/checking and any other appropriate records used by your business	

Signed

Position in the business

Date