

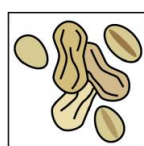
## Food Allergen Management for Caterers

People with food allergies have to take great care when eating out to avoid certain foods that could cause them harm. Food allergies can, and do, kill.

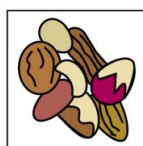
It is the responsibility of all food businesses to provide accurate allergen information to customers that request it; and, as a business, you have a legal obligation to ensure that any food you produce or prepare is safe. The penalty for failing to comply could be a fine on your business or even imprisonment.

### The 14 Food Allergens

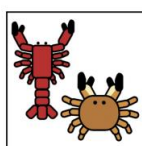
There are 14 food allergens controlled by legislation:



Peanuts



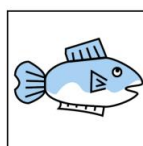
Nuts



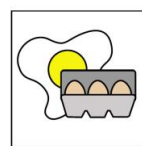
Crustaceans



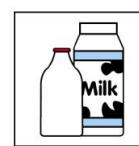
Shellfish  
Molluscs



Fish



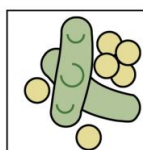
Eggs



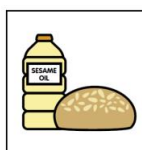
Milk



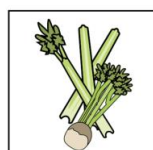
Cereals  
containing  
Gluten



Soya



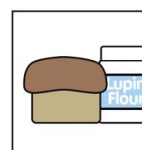
Sesame seeds



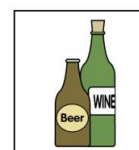
Celery



Mustard



Lupin



Sulphur Dioxide

You must know if any of these allergens are present in any of the foods you make or serve and you must be able to provide that information to customers. (Customers may ask about other ingredients to which they are allergic: any information you provide about such ingredients must also be accurate and not likely to mislead the customer)

### Identifying which allergens are present

1. Look at the ingredient list on any packets of food or ingredients which you buy in. If the food is supplied without an ingredient list ask your supplier to provide you with the allergen information.
2. Make sure that you keep this information e.g. by saving the label; transferring the information to an allergen matrix (which can be downloaded from the [Food Standards Agency website](#)); or by using [chefs' recipe cards](#). The information must be easy for staff to find and kept up to date.
3. Where you are making products or meals remember to take account of **all ingredients used** e.g. ingredients 'hiding' in sauces; garnishes; oil used for frying

etc. If you change a recipe or use a different supplier for an ingredient make sure that the allergen information is updated if necessary.

### **Providing allergen information to customers**

This can be done in a variety of ways:

- On menus/ chalk boards;
- On a notice/ ticket; or
- Verbally, providing that this is clearly signposted either by means of a notice, or on the menu etc.

e.g. ***Food Allergies and Intolerances: Please ask a member of staff if you require information about the ingredients in the food we serve.***

Where orders are taken over the telephone or online, allergen information must be provided at two stages:

- Before the purchase is complete – this could either be in writing e.g. on a website or menu; or verbally e.g. over the phone
- When the food is delivered – this could either be in writing e.g. on a sticker on the food packaging; or verbally by the delivery personnel.

### **Producing and serving allergen-free food**

If you want to provide allergen-free foods to your customers you must have a documented food safety management system in place to show how this can be achieved. Completing the following checklist will help you determine whether the controls you have in place are sufficient to provide allergen-free food safely, or if any improvements can be made to your systems. The checklist is divided into 4 sections covering Overall Management & Training; Front of House Procedures; Kitchen Procedures; and Phone & Internet Orders, including Buffet & Event Catering. Only if you can answer 'YES' to all questions should you consider providing allergen-free foods.

After completion, keep this document with your Food Safety Management Plan and remember to review it each year.


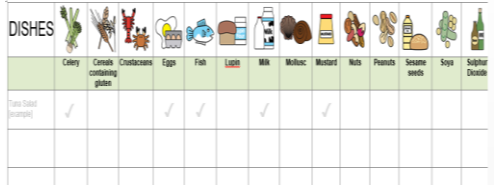
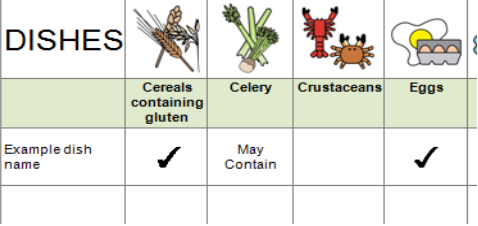
**If you have considered the controls required and you are not completely certain that you can safely provide food that is suitable for someone with a food allergy then you must tell them, so that they can then decide if they want to eat the foods you provide.**



**NEVER JUGGLE WITH CUSTOMER SAFETY**

## FOOD ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST



Name of Business			
Address from which the Business normally operates			
Name of Business owner / Food Business Operator			
Will you be preparing or offering allergen-free food?			
<p>If YES:</p> <p>List the allergens which you are able to eliminate and provide foods which are 'free from'</p>			
<p>If NO:</p> <p>You should still complete this assessment to help ensure you are meeting your legal obligations</p>		<p>Date completed:</p> <p>Signature:</p>	
<p><b>This document should be reviewed each year and amended where necessary. This is particularly important if you introduce a new product or change your kitchen procedures in any way.</b></p>			
Review Date	Reason for review/ amendments made	Staff Informed YES/NO	Signature of reviewer

## Overall Management and Training


Question	Points to consider
<p>1. Do you have a written policy on food allergies and intolerances?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>2. Do you have emergency procedures in place in the event that one of your customers suffers an allergic reaction?</p>  <p>YES/NO</p> <p>You may wish to use the Emergency Action notice at the end of this leaflet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide who is to have overall management responsibility for allergens and food safety (e.g. Manager/Chef)</li> <li>Identify the allergen risks and plan how to minimise them</li> <li>Display notices to remind staff of the risks</li> <li>If someone is suspected of suffering an allergic reaction immediate action must be taken – it is important that staff are aware of this</li> <li>Ensure there is always a trained member of staff on duty during opening hours</li> </ul>
<p>3. Do you know which allergens are present in the ingredients you use and the dishes which you prepare?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>4. Is this information recorded?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>5. Is this information regularly checked/ updated?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider using an allergen matrix or chef's recipe cards. As a minimum keep copies of ingredient labels, particularly if decanting ingredients from bulk</li> <li>Ensure this information is readily accessible by all staff</li> <li>Ensure that allergen information is checked/ updated if ingredients are sourced from a different supplier</li> <li>If kitchen staff make recipe changes they must update the allergen information and make front of house staff aware of the change</li> <li>Some manufacturers include statements on their packaging that a product "May Contain" certain allergens. This is only included where a risk assessment has been carried out and there is a real risk that the allergen may be present. Where "May Contain" statements are used these must be reflected in your allergen matrix</li> </ul>
	



Question	Points to Consider
<p>6. Are you displaying a notice advising customers to ask for information on allergens, or providing allergen information by other means e.g. on a menu or chalk board?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a legal requirement</li> <li>• If you are providing specific allergen information on a menu, for example, this must be kept up to date</li> <li>• Where you choose to 'signpost' customers to allergen information this should be provided at the point where the customer makes their order i.e. at the till point, on a menu, or another place which is easily noticed by the customer</li> </ul>
<p>7. Have all kitchen staff received food allergen awareness training?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>8. Have all front of house staff received food allergen awareness training?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>  <p>9. Can you provide evidence of staff training?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>It is good practice to ensure all training given to staff is recorded and kept on file and that refresher training is given on a regular basis. You may also wish to test staff knowledge on the procedures to be followed.</p>	<p>Training should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating staff on the potential consequences of providing incorrect information or serving food containing an ingredient that a customer is allergic to</li> <li>• Appropriate kitchen procedures to avoid cross-contamination during storage, preparation and service</li> <li>• Identifying customers with food allergies when they book a table or when staff take orders (e.g. menu reminders)</li> <li>• Alerting kitchen staff that the food they are to prepare is for someone who is allergic to certain ingredients</li> <li>• Dealing responsibly with a customer complaint over concerns that their food may be contaminated with an allergenic ingredient. Staff should not just remove the "offending" allergen from a prepared dish and send it back on the same plate, as traces of the allergen could remain and potentially cause a reaction</li> </ul> <p>Free online training is available on the Food Standards Agency website:  <a href="http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk">http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk</a>  Allergen awareness training is also available from other providers but there may be a charge for this</p>

## Front of House Procedures

Question	Points to Consider
<p>10. Do you have a procedure to be followed when taking orders from a customer with a food allergy?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how you record a customer's allergen-free request and how this is communicated to the kitchen – e.g. written on an order/ typed into an electronic device?</li> <li>• If there is a risk of cross-contamination during preparation how is this communicated to the customer?</li> </ul>
<p>11. Do you have controls in place to ensure that the allergen-free meal is given to the correct customer?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person preparing the meal or the person taking the order could take the meal out</li> <li>• The person serving the meal should always double check that the customer is the one who ordered the allergen-free meal</li> </ul>
<p>12. Have you considered any garnishes/drizzling oils etc. added at the time of service?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These should be assessed for allergens in the same way as any other ingredients which you use</li> </ul>
<p>13. If you are making food available at self-service counters, salad bars etc. do you have controls in place to prevent cross-contamination of any allergen-free foods?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure food is clearly labelled</li> <li>• Any allergen-free foods should be sufficiently separated from those containing allergenic ingredients and positioned to prevent any falling food from contaminating it</li> <li>• Provide separate (colour coded?) utensils for service</li> </ul>


## Kitchen Procedures

Question	Points to Consider
<p><b>Receipt of Ingredients:</b> 14. Do all your suppliers provide you with allergen information for the foods/ ingredients which you buy in?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>15. If you receive substituted items or choose alternative items because they are cheaper, for example, do you check whether the 'new' items contain allergenic ingredients?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food which is pre-packed should be labelled with allergen information in English: If the information is in another language you should ask that your supplier provides ingredient details in English</li> <li>• In the case of loose/ open foods allergen information can be provided on a separate sheet: you should contact your supplier for this information if they haven't provided it</li> <li>• Consider how you can prompt staff to check for allergenic ingredients in new or replacement ingredients and how this information is communicated</li> <li>• It is good practice to record any checks carried out</li> </ul>
<p><b>Storage of Ingredients:</b> 16. Do you have a storage system to prevent cross-contamination of ingredients with allergenic ingredients?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>  <p>17. If you transfer ingredients from their original packaging into storage containers, or place individual items from a bulk delivery into fridges/freezers, do you have a procedure for retaining product information such as date codes, batch codes, and allergen information?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is not possible to have a dedicated storage area for allergenic ingredients consider using a colour coding system for allergens</li> <li>• Always store allergen-free items at a higher shelf level than those containing allergenic ingredients</li> <li>• Ensure that any open bags are folded over and secured: preferably place inside a sealed container</li> <li>• Where bulk ingredients are decanted, use dedicated, air-tight storage containers where possible and ensure that all allergen information is transferred</li> <li>• If dedicated containers cannot be used they should be thoroughly washed before use: heavily scoured containers should be disposed of</li> <li>• Consider a spillage plan to clean up any allergenic ingredients</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preparation:</b> 18. Do you follow any procedures when preparing food for a customer with a food allergy?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>19. If YES, have you considered all aspects listed in the right hand column?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<p>You should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ingredient labelling to be checked for allergenic ingredients</li> <li>• Designation of one person to be responsible for preparing allergen-free meals, if possible</li> <li>• Use of a separate preparation area, if possible</li> <li>• Thorough cleaning of preparation area before and after use, using designated/ disposable cloths</li> <li>• Adequate hand washing</li> </ul>

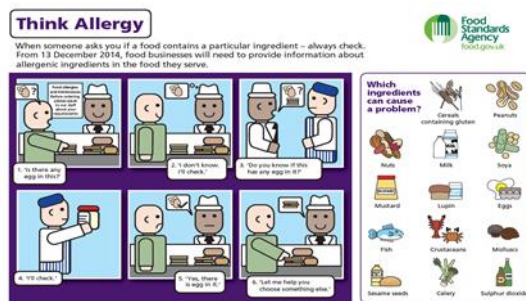
Question	Points to Consider
 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of disposable aprons/ designated washable aprons by food handlers</li> <li>• Use of separate (colour coded?) equipment and utensils: if not, these must be thoroughly cleaned between uses. Woks in particular are very hard to clean food residues from after cooking and traces of egg or fish may still be present</li> <li>• Do not re-use cooking oil to fry food for a person with a food allergy if it has been used for food containing allergens, as traces of nut protein, fish protein or gluten, for example, could still be present</li> <li>• If food is not to be served immediately, cover to prevent cross-contamination</li> </ul>
<p><b>Describe your front of house and kitchen procedures to be followed when preparing a dish for a customer with a food allergy or intolerance</b></p>	



## Phone and Internet Orders (including Buffet & Event Catering)

Question	Points to Consider
<p><b>Taking the order:</b> 20. Do you use a website, either your own or that of a third party, to advertise and take orders for collection in person or home delivery?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>  <p>21. If YES, have you considered all the aspects listed in the right hand column?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<p>The law requires that you provide allergen information before the order is placed AND at the point of delivery to the customer. You should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have a statement on your website, or any third party website, to advise customers where they can obtain allergen information before they place their order?</li> <li>• If you use printed flyers/menus do these contain a statement advising customers how to obtain allergen information?</li> <li>• Do staff taking orders ask if anyone has a food allergy or intolerance?</li> <li>• All staff taking orders over the phone or via a website must know how to deal with allergen-free requests and have access to up to date allergen information for all dishes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delivery:</b> 22. Do you have procedures in place for identifying meals which have been prepared for a customer with a food allergy at the point of delivery; and for ensuring that there is no risk of cross-contamination during transport?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider applying a sticker to the container when filled in the kitchen or handwriting the information on the outer bag: all information must be permanently marked and clearly readable</li> <li>• Consider placing the allergen-free meal in a separate bag from any other meals to prevent cross-contamination through leakage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Buffets, Platters &amp; Event Catering:</b> 23. If your business offers an event catering service do you have a system in place for recording any allergies you are notified of?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p>24. If you supply food in the form of a buffet is the food clearly labelled?</p> <p>YES/NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food should be clearly labelled to identify any allergens present and the labels/signs must remain with the food at all times whilst customers are serving themselves</li> <li>• Try to minimise the risk of cross contamination by grouping platters together according to the allergens present and providing separate serving utensils</li> <li>• Consider if you need to provide instructions to the person who will be setting out the food</li> <li>• If specific allergen-free food has been requested consider providing this on a separate, clearly labelled platter</li> </ul>

It is suggested that you display one or both of the following posters in staff areas:



A copy of the first poster is available to download online at:

[www.ambervalley.gov.uk/allergensinfood](http://www.ambervalley.gov.uk/allergensinfood)

Copies of the second poster are available in different languages on the Food Standards Agency website, together with many more resources

[www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide](http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide)

A video specifically aimed at allergen control in catering establishments has also been produced by the Environmental Health Departments of South Derbyshire District Council and Amber Valley Borough Council together with Derbyshire County Council Trading Standards Service: this is available to view from the following link:

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/allergens](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/allergens)

If after completing the risk assessment you feel that your business needs more advice please contact Derbyshire Trading Standards Service on

Phone: 01629 536166

e-mail: [trading.standards@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@derbyshire.gov.uk)

