

New research reveals challenges facing young people with food allergies and intolerances

The results are from a [bespoke survey](#), released today by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), in partnership with Allergy UK (AUK) and the Anaphylaxis Campaign (AC), on the views of young people living with food allergies and intolerances. The survey also revealed that while 67% of respondents reported being aware of the legal requirement of food businesses to provide information on the top 14 allergens, only 14% felt extremely confident asking for allergen information when dining out and 14% reported feeling not at all confident.

Working with AUK and AC, we are launching easy to ASK, a campaign designed to empower young people to ask food businesses about allergens when eating out, so that they can make safe choices. The campaign follows several allergy-related deaths among young people – [data](#) shows that children and young adults are disproportionately more prone to die from an allergic reaction than adults.

Easy to ASK is also a reminder to businesses to be up front about the provision of accurate allergen information, particularly with this vulnerable group. Asking a customer if they have food allergies could save a life. The campaign includes the simple mnemonic:

- Always ask about allergies
- Speak up
- Keep safe

Research reveals worrying challenges

When meeting new people, 5% of respondents with a food allergy and 11% with a food intolerance reported not telling anyone about their condition at all, potentially risking allergic reactions or fatal consequences. When asked why, some respondents said they felt embarrassed and some said that their condition was too complicated to explain.

Other findings include:

- 59% reported they tend to visit the same places when eating out
- 55% reported always researched the menu online before going to a new or unfamiliar place
- only 9% reported always contacting a restaurant in advance to check they provide allergen information

Food businesses step up

FSA Chairman Heather Hancock said: '[We've seen real progress in how food businesses approach customers with allergies](#). However, 60% of the young people surveyed tell us they've avoided eating out in the past six months because of their condition.

'Living with a food allergy or intolerance is not easy and can have fatal consequences. Many in this age group will be students starting out at university or college, in new surroundings and with

new friends. It's crucial that they feel confident to speak up and ask for allergen information, and that the people around them make that easier.

'Food businesses have an important part to play in making this age group feel more at ease. They are required always to provide accurate allergen information. Through our easy to ASK campaign, we're raising awareness and understanding to boost the confidence of young people, and we're encouraging food businesses to make it easier for everyone to ask the question, speak up and help keep those at risk safe.'

Survey report

[Young people and food allergies/intolerances](#) was conducted by the Food Standards Agency in partnership with Allergy UK and Anaphylaxis Campaign. The survey is based on responses from 2599 young people aged 16-24 in the UK.

Many respondents skipped some of the questions. Therefore, tables are based on the respondents to the relevant question, rather than all 2599 respondents.