

Young people and food allergies and intolerances

Area of research interest: [Food hypersensitivity](#)

Study duration: 2018-07-09

Background

We led research on young people with food allergies and intolerances to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges young people face living with their condition.

Objective and Approach

The specific aims of this research were to:

- Understand the profile of this cohort of young people
- Characterise their experience of living with a food allergy/intolerance or other food condition
- Explore their experiences of eating out, specifically when not with someone who provides support
- Identify key support mechanisms for young people eating out with a food allergy/intolerance

The research was supported by Allergy UK and Anaphylaxis Campaign, who allowed us to contact their membership providing our targeted sample base.

Findings from this research provide more detailed data on young people and the challenges associated with living with a food allergy or intolerance and will inform a planned campaign targeting young people when eating out or ordering food, especially when moving away from home. Findings also provide a baseline against which subsequent surveys can be benchmarked.

Survey Monkey, an online platform, was used for data collection on 28 questions. The survey questionnaire was designed and piloted by us and peer reviewed by an independent expert.

Results

- The survey captured the views of 2599 respondents aged 16-24 years. Of these, 49% of respondents reported having a food allergy, 33% reported having a food intolerance and 18% reported having both a food allergy and intolerance
- 88% of respondents reported eating out or ordering takeaways/ food online without support
- Before eating out without support, 55% of these respondents reported always researching the menu, and 49% said that they always pack their medication. 7% of respondents reported never preparing
- When eating out, 59% of eligible respondents reported that they often tend to visit the same places

- When ordering a takeaway/food online without support, 51% of eligible respondents stated that they always check an online menus allergen information before choosing what to eat. 39% reported that they always only order specific dishes that they know are safe
- Overall, 60% of respondents reported they had avoid eating out in the last six months because of their condition
- 67% of respondents reported that they were aware of the legal requirement of food businesses to provide customers with information on the top 14 allergens, when used as ingredients in the food they serve
- 53% of all eligible respondents stated that they felt extremely, very or quite confident that food businesses are able to provide correct information regarding allergens in food they serve
- 14% reported feeling extremely confident asking for allergen information when eating out or ordering a takeaway/ food online, while 14% reported feeling not at all confident

Research report

PDF

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