

Allergen guidance for industry

Allergen ingredients information should be recorded and should contain:

- product specification sheets
- ingredients labels
- recipes or explanations of the dishes provided

Allergen information can also be provided as part of a conversation with a customer but this needs to be backed up by the information being in writing to ensure the information is accurate and consistent. The customer has a responsibility to tell you about their allergy or intolerance.

Recording allergen information and clear communication with your staff, customers and suppliers will help to ensure that customers with food allergies are given accurate information.

You will need to think about how:

- food allergens are handled
- information is given to the customer
- staff can be trained about allergens

Declaring the 14 allergens

Food products that contain any of the allergens as an ingredient will need to be declared by the business.

Annex II (as amended by [Commission Delegated Regulation No. 78/2014](#)) of the [EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation \(EU FIC\)](#) lists the 14 major foods which can cause allergic reactions. These are:

- celery
- cereals that contain gluten – including wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan), rye, barley and oats
- crustaceans – such as prawns, crabs and lobsters
- eggs
- fish
- lupin
- milk
- molluscs – such as mussels and oysters
- mustard
- tree nuts – including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
- peanuts
- sesame seeds
- soybeans
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if they are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million)

Some ingredients and substances include 'processing aids' used during the manufacture of a food or drink product. These processing aids could still be present after the product has been manufactured. In the case of sulphites, which are often used to preserve dried fruit, they might still be present after the fruit is used to make chutney.

Allergens must be declared if you provide:

- prepacked food or drink
- non-prepacked food or drink

We provide an [allergy and intolerance sign](#) to download and print off for your business.

Gluten-free

If you are providing food that is gluten-free, there are strict rules.

In order for food to be gluten-free it must not contain more than 20mg/kg of gluten.

If you are making or selling any food that is gluten-free you must have processes in place to prevent cross-contamination.

How to keep your food allergic customers safe

If you own a food business, it is a legal requirement that you provide information about 14 allergens when required and that the food you provide is safe. This is especially important for customers who live with food allergy or intolerance.

[Our research](#), carried out in partnership with Allergy UK and Anaphylaxis Campaign, has found that 60% of young people with food allergy or intolerance avoid eating out or ordering food because of their condition. However, more than half (59%) of them say that they often visit the same food outlet if they've eaten safely there before. This suggests that good allergen info could be good for business.

How you can help

We are encouraging food businesses to make it easier for your customers to ask for allergen information. Here is a checklist to help you when providing a meal for a customer with food allergy or intolerance.

1. Do your customers find it 'easy to ask' for allergen or dietary information? Consider asking your staff to check when taking orders or reservations.
2. Do you have a process in place to ensure you can provide a safe meal for someone with an allergy or intolerance to a food? For example:
 - do you provide allergen information in an accessible and upfront manner?
 - do you have accurate recipes for each dish that you serve, so there is a clear list of the ingredients you use in your meals?
 - do you label takeaway meals clearly, so your customer knows which dish is which and what is suitable for those with allergy?
3. Do you keep an accurate record of all the allergens in your meals? Do you have reminders in place to update it when you make changes?
4. Do you know what your critical control points are within the kitchen and in the storage of ingredients to prevent allergen cross-contamination?
5. With this assessment in mind, what can be done to remove or reduce risk of allergen cross-contamination? If nothing can be done, be honest and communicate this risk to your customers.
6. Have you and your team received suitable allergen training to manage allergens appropriately within the business? Is everyone working at the business clear on what this process is?

We have free resources to help your staff understand and apply the allergen requirements. You can also speak to a food safety officer in your area.

Resources for caterers selling loose foods

[Think Allergy poster](#) (529.81 KB)

[Think Allergy Poster Chinese.pdf](#) (524.68 KB)

[Think Allergy Poster Punjabi.pdf](#) (508.32 KB)

[Think Allergy Poster Bengali.pdf](#) (500.43 KB)

[Think Allergy Poster Urdu.pdf](#) (552.05 KB)

Allergen management guides can be found in the [Safer food, better business for caterers](#) pack.

Allergen training and recording for staff

As a food business, it is your responsibility to know which allergens are present in the foods you sell or serve.

To be able to identify which dishes contain allergens you should:

- check the ingredients list of all branded products
- use the same recipes every time
- always check what is delivered is what was ordered
- keep allergen information up to date
- keep ingredients in original or labelled containers

- label pre-packed foods with allergen information
- train staff

[Allergy training](#)

Keep staff trained and informed

All staff should:

- know the procedures and policies when asked to provide allergen information
- get training on handling allergy information requests
- know the risks of allergen cross-contamination when handling and preparing foods

Resources

[Chef's recipe sheet for allergens](#) (1.56 MB)

[Chef's recipe sheet for allergens \(Word\)](#) (343 KB)

[Dishes and their allergen content - menu chart](#) (1.05 MB)

[Dishes and their allergen content - menu chart](#) (1001.5 KB)

[Allergy and intolerance sign](#) (23.74 KB)

Enforcement

Local councils will be enforcing the regulations that food businesses must comply to. If a business fails to act on previous advice given by the local council, a penalty notice, known as an improvement notice, may be issued.

These notices will formally outline the steps a business needs to take in order to improve. There will be a set period of time allocated to allow for the business to make changes.

If you want to appeal an improvement notice, you have 28 days to respond to the notice. These 28 days start from the date the notice was issued.