

Allergen and intolerance Fact sheets for food businesses



**Allergen and intolerance
Fact sheets for food businesses**

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Fact sheet 1

Allergens— Peanuts, nuts and their products



Peanuts and tree nuts

Some foods can cause problems for the peanut/nut allergic individuals and should be avoided unless they can positively confirm there is no peanut/tree nut protein present. Sometimes peanuts will be stored near other nuts in the production line or processed with other nuts and contamination may occur as a result of this practice. If you have a peanut allergy it's safer to avoid all nut products. Tree nut allergic individuals should avoid peanuts for the same reason.

What about coconut?

Despite the fact that coconut has the word 'nut' in its name, coconuts are not related to tree nuts or peanuts. Many individuals who have an allergy to these items can still eat coconut (unless their doctor has told them not to).

What is lupin?

Lupin is a legume and is mainly used in flour-based products such as pastry and pasta. The major allergens in lupin are also found in peanuts, so people who are allergic to peanuts could react to lupin. People with peanut allergy should avoid foods containing lupin.

Effects of these peanuts and other nuts on sufferers

Severe allergic reaction— anaphylaxis

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
- Anaphylaxis Australia (www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- *The New Additive Code Breaker: Everything you should know about additives in your food* by Maurice Hanssen (Lothian 1991, ISBN: 0850914779)
- The Food Intolerant Consumer (www.foodintol.com)
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)

The following foods can contain peanuts:

Asian meals
baked goods
biscuits (sweet or dry)
bouillon
breakfast cereals
cakes
chocolates
nougat
health bars
hydrolysed vegetable protein
ice cream
kebabs
marzipan
muesli
natural flavourings
pastry goods
peanut butter
peanut oil (arachis oil)
praline
sauces (gado gado, pesto, satay, etc.)
soup
spaghetti sauce
spring rolls
vegetarian dishes
vegetable oil
wontons

Tree nuts include:

almonds
brazil nuts
cashews
chestnuts
hazelnuts
macadamia nuts
pecans
pine nuts
pistachios
walnuts

The following foods can or do contain nuts:

Amaretto (almond liqueur)
Asian meals
biscuits (sweet and dry)
breakfast cereals
cakes
chocolates
gravy
health bars
ice cream
marzipan
muesli
nougat
sauces (pesto, etc)
Frangelico (hazelnut liqueur)
praline

Important: The lists above are not complete lists of foods and ingredients to avoid. They are intended to be used as a guide.

Fact sheet 2

Allergens— Eggs and egg products



Most people who are allergic to hen's eggs are also allergic to similar proteins found in other bird's eggs such as duck eggs and should not consume any type of egg.

Effects of these foods on sufferers

Severe allergic reaction—anaphylaxis

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
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- *The New Additive Code Breaker: Everything you should know about additives in your food* by Maurice Hanssen (Lothian 1991, ISBN: 0850914779)
- The Food Intolerant Consumer (www.foodintol.com)
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)

Egg and egg products can be labelled as follows:

albumen	livetin
albuminate	ovalbumin
egg powder	ovomucin
egg solids	ovomuroid
egg white	ovovitellin
egg yolk	silici
globulin	vitellin

Products that can contain eggs include:

almond bread	hamburgers, rissoles
batters (pancakes, for deep frying, etc)	and meatloaf
biscuits	jellied meat
brioche	macaroons
cake mixes	malted drinks
cakes	marshmallows
choux pastry	meringues
consommé	mousses
crumbed products (cutlets, parmigana, etc)	omelettes
custard	pancakes and pikelets
dessert mixes	pavlovas
doughnuts	puddings
egg-based dressings (mayonnaise, tartare)	quiche
egg noodles	sausages
egg-based sauces (hollandaise, béarnaise)	slices (hedgehog, lemon slice, etc.)
glazed rolls or pastries	soufflés
	waffles
	wines (selected)

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

Fact sheet 3

Allergens— Fish, crustaceans, molluscs and their products



Fish, crustaceans and their products

If a customer identifies themselves as suffering from a fish, seafood or crustacean allergy, it is important for you to determine which classes of seafood they are allergic to.

The major groups of fish and shellfish which can trigger allergic reactions are:

- scaly or finned fish (e.g. salmon, cod, mackerel, sardines, herring, anchovies, tuna, trout, haddock, John Dory)
- crustaceans (e.g. prawns, shrimps, lobster, crab, crayfish, yabbies, marron)
- molluscs (e.g. snail, abalone, clams, oysters, mussel)
- cephalopods (e.g. octopus, cuttlefish, squid, calamari)
- gastropods (e.g. sea slugs, snails)

Source: www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodmatters/foodallergies/allergies.cfm

Other important points to consider:

- People who are allergic to one type of shellfish often react to other types.
- Allergy to shellfish is quite common; people who are sensitive can react to a number of different types of shellfish.
- Food served in seafood or other restaurants may be cross contaminated with fish or shellfish during storage, preparation and cooking.
- **It is possible for an allergic reaction to occur from cooking odours or handling of shellfish.**
- Any foods that have been cooked in a deep fryer or on a BBQ or flat grill where fish has also been cooked may also cause an allergic reaction.

Effects of these foods on sufferers

Severe allergic reaction—anaphylaxis

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat

- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

In the FSANZ Food Standards Code (FSC), fish means ‘any of the cold-blooded aquatic vertebrates and aquatic invertebrates including shellfish, but does not include amphibians and reptiles’. Seafood means ‘all aquatic vertebrates and aquatic invertebrates intended for human consumption, but excludes amphibians, mammals, reptiles and aquatic plants’.

However, these definitions can be confusing. Allergy specialists usually differentiate fish from crustaceans and Food Standards also separates these allergens into two separate categories.

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
- Anaphylaxis Australia (www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- *The New Additive Code Breaker: Everything you should know about additives in your food* by Maurice Hanssen (Lothian 1991, ISBN: 0850914779)
- The Food Intolerant Consumer (www.foodintol.com)
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)

Products that may or do contain fish or seafood ingredients:

400: Alginate acid
 401: Sodium alginate
 402: Potassium alginate
 403: Ammonium alginate
 404: Calcium alginate
 405: Propylene inosinate
 406: Agar
 407: Carrageenan
 631: Disodium inosinate/inosinate
 Asian foods
 belachan (shrimp paste)
 bouillabaisse
 caesar salad dressing
 caviar
 cod liver oil
 fish sauce
 gelatin
 nam pla (Thai fish sauce)
 omega 3 supplements
 oyster sauce
 prawn crackers
 sashimi
 seafood extender (surimi, crab sticks)
 sushi
 tempura
 Worcestershire sauce

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

Fact sheet 4

Allergens— Milk and milk products



Most sufferers of milk allergies are young children below the age of four. Some people do not outgrow this allergy.

Be aware that some non-dairy products contain dairy. You must always check the list of ingredients to make sure.

Effects of these foods on sufferers

Severe allergic reaction—anaphylaxis

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
- Anaphylaxis Australia (www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- *The New Additive Code Breaker: Everything you should know about additives in your food* by Maurice Hanssen (Lothian 1991, ISBN: 0850914779)
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- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)



Milk and milk products can be labelled as:

beverage whitener	skim milk powder
caseinate	whey
milk powder	whey powder
milk solids	

The following food products are derived from milk or milk products:

butter	infant formula
buttermilk	milk drinks (hot chocolate, milkshakes, some coffee drinks)
cheese	powdered coconut milk
cheese spreads	
cottage cheese	
cream	
crème fraiche	
ghee	sour cream
ice cream	yoghurt

Some of the foods that contain milk products include:

beverage whitener	margarine
biscuits	milk chocolate, white chocolate
bread, foccacias, etc.	most desserts
crumbed foods	colourings and natural flavourings
dessert sauces	
fruit juice	
manufactured foods	soup mixes

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

Fact sheet 5

Allergens— Soy and soy products



Soy allergy is most common in infants. As with other allergies, the reactions can include skin reactions and breathing difficulties.

Soy products are used in many processed foods. It is important to read labels of all ingredients in a dish carefully. Many vegetable oils have a 'May contain soy bean oil' warning, or are actually derived from soy beans. (Soy beans are vegetables.) One of the most common soy derived product is lecithin (322).

Effects of these foods on sufferers

Severe allergic reaction—anaphylaxis

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
- Anaphylaxis Australia (www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- *The New Additive Code Breaker: Everything you should know about additives in your food* by Maurice Hanssen (Lothian 1991, ISBN: 0850914779)
- The Food Intolerant Consumer (www.foodintol.com)
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)

The following foods can contain soy:

baked goods	confectionary
baked items	dessert mixes
batters	lecithin
bread	malted milk powder
carob	margarine
cereals	milk powder
chocolate	oils
chocolate biscuits	sausages

Soy products include:

bean curd	soy protein
hydrolysed vegetable protein	soy sauce
miso	soya
oil spray cans	tempeh
some Asian sauces	textured vegetable protein (TVP)
soy bean paste	tofu
soy flour	vegetable gums

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

Fact sheet 6

Allergens— Sesame seeds and sesame products



Products that are derived from sesame seeds are found in many processed products. If you have a customer who is allergic to sesame seeds, it is important that you check ingredients labels carefully to see if sesame seed products are contained. Sesame can be called by other names on ingredient lists as listed in the box across.

Effects of these foods on sufferers

Severe allergic reaction—**anaphylaxis**

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
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- The Food Intolerant Consumer (www.foodintol.com)
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)

Sesame seeds and sesame products include:

benne/benne seed/ benniseed	sesamol/sesamolina sesamum indicum
gingelly seeds	sim sim
gingelly oil	tahina/tahini
hommus	til
seeds	

Sesame seeds are often found in the following foods:

Asian foods	pretzels
bakery products	processed meats and sausages
cereals	sauces
crackers	seasonings
crumbed foods	sesame oil
dips	soups
dressings	spice blends (e.g. dukkah)
halva	spreads
herbs	tahini
margarine	tempeh
marinades	vegetable burgers
Middle Eastern foods	vegetable oil
health bars	
paté	

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

Fact sheet 7

Intolerance— Sulphites

The major function of sulphites is to preserve food and inhibit browning reactions. Sulphites slow down the micro organisms that could otherwise spoil foods and can be added to cut fruit and vegetables to prevent browning once cut or peeled.

Identifying sulphites

Sulphites are generally labelled using their food identification number. Look for the following numbers on food labels:

220 Sulphur dioxide

221 Sodium sulphite

222 Sodium bisulphite

223 Sodium metabisulphite

224 Potassium metabisulphite

225 Potassium sulphite

226 Calcium sulphite *

227 Calcium hydrogen sulphite *

228 Potassium bisulphite

* (not permitted in Australia)

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
- Anaphylaxis Australia (www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- *The New Additive Code Breaker: Everything you should know about additives in your food* by Maurice Hanssen (Lothian 1991, ISBN: 0850914779)
- The Food Intolerant Consumer (www.foodintol.com)
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)

Sulphites can be found in the following foods:

Very high levels

dried fruit
lemon and lime juice UHT (not frozen)
wine
molasses
sauerkraut juice
grape juice
smallgoods
sausages

High levels

dried potato products (instant mashed potato)
wine vinegar
gravies and sauces
candied fruit
fruit toppings
corn starch
maple syrup
pectin
jams

Moderate levels

seafood and shellfish
sauerkraut
pickled food
frozen potato products
corn syrup

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

Fact sheet 8

Intolerances— Gluten and dairy products

What is a food intolerance?

Some people have a food intolerance, where they develop adverse reactions to certain foods but are not allergic to the food.

Food intolerance is associated with symptoms occurring after eating a substance which a sufferer's body cannot handle. The sufferer's digestive system does not produce sufficient quantities of a particular chemical needed to break down the food and aid digestion. Alternatively, the food substance causes a reaction directly.

The most common food intolerances are gluten and dairy. Foods that contain gluten and/or dairy products can cause intolerance in some people.

Are food intolerances a serious health risk?

On the surface it appears that some intolerances are lifestyle threatening rather than life threatening. But if they are left untreated, food intolerances can lead to serious health risks. It should also be noted that some people have more than one food intolerance. Changing a person's diet easily controls food intolerance.

Diets such as gluten free, dairy free, yeast free, fructose free or wheat free have been very successful in eliminating symptoms. If properly managed, such diets bring sufferers back to full health.

Coeliac disease/Gluten intolerance

Coeliac disease may also be called gluten intolerance or gluten sensitivity. It is an auto-immune disease—the body's immune system attacks itself when gluten is digested.

People with coeliac disease are unable to digest gluten (a protein) found in wheat, rye, barley and oats. This protein actually damages the lining of the small intestine of sufferers of coeliac disease, causing damage that flattens out the tiny villi (finger-like protrusions that provide most of the surface area for nutrient absorption in the stomach).

When a person with coeliac disease eats just a crumb of bread, damage occurs to the lining of their small intestine, which stops the body from absorbing nutrients. In the long term, this can lead to unexplained weight loss, chronic anaemia, osteoporosis and—eventually—malnutrition.

The type of reaction can be similar to a food intolerance—stomach pain, nausea, diarrhoea and/or vomiting. This reaction can happen immediately after eating a food containing gluten or could be delayed for several hours.

It is not life threatening and does not cause anaphylaxis. The only treatment for coeliac disease is a strict life-long gluten free diet. It is not a fad diet, although you will find people choose to follow this diet for non medical reasons (and not always stringently).

Ingredients that contain gluten include:

baking powder, derived from wheat sources	cracked wheat malt
barley	matzo
breakfast cereal	oatmeal
bulgur	rye
cornflour prepared from wheat	semolina
cous cous	soy sauce
	wheat

Foods that contain can gluten include:

batters for frying	pancakes
beer	pasta
biscuits	pastry (spring rolls, samosas, dim sims, etc.)
bread	pastry items
cakes	pie fillings
casseroles	pita bread
confectionary	puddings
crumbed products (cutlets, parmigiana, etc.)	sausages
crumble toppings	scones
custards	scotch and whiskey
gnocchi	soups
gravy	stuffing (in roasted meats)
hamburgers, rissoles and meatloaf	waffles
icing sugar mixture	wraps (roti, burritos, etc.)
malt vinegar	
noodles	

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

What is a gluten free diet?

According to Food Standards Australia New Zealand, a gluten-free diet is defined as a diet having no detectable gluten, using current test methods.

To guarantee that a food item is gluten-free, you must be able to ensure that there is no gluten present. Before making this guarantee, consider some of the cross-contamination issues described on the page.

What are the alternatives?

The following foods **do not** contain gluten:

buckwheat
corn or maize-derived products
legumes
most dairy products
most oils
potato
rice (including glutinous rice)
tapioca

The following products **do not** contain gluten, even if **derived from wheat**:

caramel (150)
dextrose
fructose
glucose
glucose syrup

Dairy (lactose) intolerance

Some people are **intolerant** to milk, but they are not **allergic** to milk. It is important to distinguish between people who have lactose intolerance and those who have a milk protein (casein) allergy. Individuals who are intolerant to milk are called lactose intolerant. This is caused by the lack of the enzyme lactase. Lactase assists in the digestion of lactose (the sugar in milk).

The symptoms of lactose intolerance are similar to a milk allergy. Symptoms can include diarrhoea, nausea, stomach pain, bloating, flatulence and malabsorption. Dairy intolerance does not cause rashes or anaphylaxis.

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance (www.foodallergyalliance.org)
- Anaphylaxis Australia (www.allergyfacts.org.au)
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- The Food Intolerant Consumer (www.foodintol.com)
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy—Education Resources (www.allergy.org.au)

The following foods may contain milk or milk products:

biscuits
butter
buttermilk
caseinate
cheese
cheese spreads
colourings
cottage cheese
cream
crème fraiche
desserts
dessert sauces
formula milk powder
ghee
margarine
milk drinks (hot chocolate, milk shakes, some coffee drinks)
milk powder
natural flavours
sour cream
whey and whey powder
yoghurt

Important: The list above is not a complete list of foods and ingredients to avoid. It is intended to be used as a helpful guide.

Fact sheet 9

Allergy and Intolerance— Cross-contamination and labelling

Cross contamination

The preparation and storage of food items will need to be considered if a customer identifies themselves as an allergy or intolerance sufferer. Food ingredients as well as the preparation utensils and equipment that are used to prepare a meal for a sufferer must have had no contact with any other foods or preparation items that are used normally. Cooking equipment that is normally used for other food items must be thoroughly cleaned or have not been used previously. It may be better to prepare a special diet meal in a separate frypan, rather than on the flat grill. Clean utensils and chopping boards should also be used in the preparation of special diets.

The following cross-contamination risks should be considered:

barbecues and char grills
buffets or smorgasbords
deep fryers
dry storage containers that contain more than one ingredient
flat grills
leaning across ingredients.
sandwich makers
shared chopping boards, utensils, colanders and strainers
splashing from one dish to another
spreads (i.e. margarine)
traces on hands, gloves, aprons, cloths, and equipment like knives, spoons, spatulas
washing-up water

If you can't guarantee that you can prepare a strict allergy- or intolerance-free meal, you must notify the customer. Explain to them your setup.

An example may be a small take-away shop that only has one deep fryer and one fridge. There is a possibility that cross-contamination may occur. You could tell your customer that you will do everything in your power to prepare a specific meal, but given the space constraints there is a small chance that there will be traces of other ingredients present in their meal.

Never promise something that you can't deliver. Explain the precautions you are taking to the customer and let them decide for themselves.

Ingredient labelling

An ingredient means any substance, including a food additive, used in the preparation, manufacture or handling of a food. When labelling these ingredients, they must be listed in descending order of ingoing weight (the statement must begin with the ingredient in the largest quantity and end with the ingredient in the smallest quantity). The names of ingredients should be accurate and sufficiently detailed to ensure that they are not false, misleading or deceptive, or likely to mislead or deceive.

Do you know that these include what are known as processing aids? Processing aids are what are referred to in the above definition in the terms preparation, handling and manufacture. They can include oils that are used during cooking

that may not be a direct ingredient or flour used to help prepare a food item.

Food retailers who prepare and sell their food items from the same premises are not required to label their products, however the same information must be 'provided to the purchaser upon request'.

The FSANZ Food Standards Code requires the retailer of a prepared food item, to provide the requested information verbally or in writing. Retailers must have this information available for all staff to access, so that all requests can be answered accurately. This means that standard recipes are listed and followed; in case the person who made a particular product (i.e. a baker on overnight shift) is not available at the time the request for information is required (i.e. in the afternoon when the baker is asleep).

References

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (www.foodstandards.gov.au)
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- Anaphylaxis Australia (www.allergyfacts.org.au)
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