

FOOD SAFETY CONVERSATION



Allergen Awareness for Beverage Service

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT

In this Food Safety Conversation we are going to discuss allergies and intolerances and the controls we should have in place to avoid allergic reactions as well as reactions as a result of an intolerance. Following this conversation, you will understand:

- The difference between allergy and intolerance,
- What steps you should take when serving a customer with an allergy or intolerance and
- How to prevent cross-contact when using barista coffee machines and drink blenders.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Background

People often get confused between a food allergy and an intolerance. A food allergy is a response by the body's immune system to a food; the reaction can range from mild to severe and for some people even the slightest trace of an allergen can result in a severe response, including potentially fatal anaphylactic shock.

An intolerance is a non-immune system response to eating certain foods, usually because the body is unable to process the food effectively. Symptoms can affect the digestive, skin and respiratory systems, and although not life-threatening, they can make sufferers extremely unwell.

Coeliac disease is a condition where consuming gluten results in the body's immune system attacking its own tissue, causing a range of symptoms, mostly affecting the digestive system and potentially causing significant damage to the intestine.

In the UK and Ireland food business are legally required to provide information on the 14 allergens that must be declared. However, people can be allergic to any food and allergies can be very specific.

Allergen Information

Allergen information can be provided in paper form in an allergen folder, on a tablet, on menus or via a QR code. You should always know where the allergen information is and how to access it. Make yourself familiar with the allergen information and if you notice anything missing or a potential error, notify your manager.

Milk is one of the 14 allergens and an ingredient in many hot drinks, shakes and smoothies. However, allergens can be found in other beverages, such as wheat or barley in beer and sulphides or egg in wine. If a customer has an allergy to any of the 14 allergens, you should advise them how to access the allergy information. Customers should read the relevant information and use it to make an informed decision. Never advise a customer or make any assumptions or guesses about the beverages.

If the customer needs more information, has an allergy to a food other than the 14, or has any specific concerns you should get your manager or an Allergen Champion to attend the customer.

Barista Coffees and Other Hot Drinks

Jugs and cloths used should be colour coordinated, to prevent cross-contact between milk and alternative milk types. Follow the following steps:

- Select the correct colour coded jug for the type of milk requested,
- Purge the steam arm before use to flush out any milk, by opening the valve and releasing steam for approximately 4 seconds, before steaming the required milk,
- Immediately after steaming the milk, wipe down the arm with the appropriate coloured cloth for the type of milk used, then purge the steam arm for a further 4 seconds.
- All colour coded cloths must be stored in separate, clearly marked containers and should be replaced approximately every 4 hours, and at least at the end of the day, to avoid build-up of milk residue. If reusable, they must be machine washed.

Blended Drinks

Jugs and lids should be colour-coded, aligned to the colour-coding used for milk jugs and cloths. Separate jugs should be available for fruit and vegetable-based drinks that do not contain milk or alternatives to milk. All jugs and lids should be washed in a dishwasher between uses and, where this is not possible, they must be subject to a deep-clean between uses.