

# Process for Patients with Food Allergies and Special Diets

This document outlines the process for establishing a patient's allergen or special diet status and how to provide allergen and ingredient information.

It is imperative that all employees, regardless of their role, complete allergen training every 6 months. We should be able to confidently articulate and demonstrate how the processes work to new starters and to all staff during the allergen or special diet refresher training – all of which must be recorded on individual training record cards.

This document should be used to complement any training provided to staff.

## Obtaining Allergen or Special Diet Information

There are several ways of capturing accurate patient information. There will be local arrangements at each hospital but the procedure for each ward within one hospital must be consistent.

We must capture information on a standard form and ensure it is documented and controlled. The form needs to be clear with up-to-date terminology (including IDDSI descriptors) and in a format that is easily completed by clinical staff.

### Clinical Teams

- Clinical teams to obtain any patient dietary and allergen requirements at point of admission, confirming any related foods that might be relevant (for example, if an allergy to onions also includes spring onions, leeks, shallots, garlic or chives).
- Clinical teams **must** share this information with the Catering Team / Ward Hosts
- Requirements **must** be communicated to ward catering team via diet grid or locally agreed written/printed alternative. White boards and non-permanent signs should be discouraged. Formal documentation is required for traceability via IT or hard copy.
- Clinical staff are responsible for updating this information throughout the day, especially when there are any changes to patient dietary needs. **Any changes or updates must be clearly communicated to the Ward Host.**

### Ward Hosts

- If allergen or special diet information is not clearly communicated, Ward Hosts **must not** take food orders or serve meals until any/all dietary restrictions are known or confirmed to be absent.
- Ward Host must understand what food allergy or special diet requirement the patient has
- Reconfirm allergen status with patient, parent, relative or clinical team at every service e.g. "do you have any food allergies", "I can see you are allergic to milk, is that correct? Do you have any other food allergies"?
- Provide up to date and reliable allergen information so a patient can make an informed decision (see detailed process on next page)
- Help with understanding the layout of the menu or matrix but do not provide advice on what they should choose
- If you are unsure call the Catering Office and/or check with the clinical staff before taking the patients meal order. You should escalate any delay to the manager.

**Where a patient is unable to communicate, the decision of which dish to order is the responsibility of the clinical or care teams, not the Medirest Team.**

## Providing Allergen or Ingredient Information

Where appropriate, if allergen or ingredient information is requested, the below process must be followed.



Who the Ward Host should contact and the numbers to call, should allergen information be needed, must be agreed locally.

### STEP 1: Ward Host to contact Catering Team

Ward Hosts must contact (e.g. call, visit, bleep) the site catering office, Catering Supervisors/Manager or Allergen Champion. The site Medirest helpdesk or Service Centre should be contacted if they are unable to contact the Catering Team. Ward Hosts must provide the following information:

1. Patient name/initials
2. Ward Name
3. Bed Number
4. Food Allergies

### STEP 2: Catering Teams to obtain and provide allergen information

When the Ward Host calls, the site Catering Supervisors/Manager or Allergen Champion must ensure they understand the allergy/allergies the patient has. Any allergen information request must take a priority, and they must act on this request immediately.

If the query is to check if a product contains certain allergens or ingredients, then:

1. Check the product packaging where available
2. If the packaging is not available, then the item should be checked on The Source. The correct PLU must be used. See separate instructions on how to do this.
3. If The Source is not available or cannot be accessed, then the Master Allergen Folder should be used.
4. Provide information back to the Ward Host.

If the query is to provide a list of suitable items for the patient, then:

- If one of the 14 major allergens
  1. Obtain the allergen matrix from the Master Allergen Folder or Teams
  2. Photocopy or print the matrix
  3. Add patient name/initials, ward, bed number and date to the top of the page
  4. Provide patient with matrix so they can selection the dishes that are suitable for their dietary needs.
- If not one of the 14 major allergens
  1. Obtain the ingredients list spreadsheet from the Master Allergen Folder or Teams
  2. Photocopy or print the ingredients list spreadsheet
  3. Add patient name/initials, ward, bed number and date to the top of the page
  4. Provide patient with ingredients list spreadsheet so they can select the dishes that are suitable for their dietary needs.

If the patient is unable to read the information, please speak to the Nurse in Charge for help.

## Master Allergen Folders

- Folders must be easily accessible to the team so that information can be provided quickly following the request, especially at point of order.
- All catering staff must know where the Master Allergen Folder(s) are kept and how they should be used to provide allergen and ingredient information.
- The Allergen Master Folder must never be removed from its allocated location(s).
- We recommend the following number of Master Allergen Folders, depending on size of hospital and operating logistics.
  - 1-10 wards - 1 master folder
  - 11-20 wards - 2 master folders
  - 21-30 wards - 3 master folders
  - 31-50 wards - 4 master folders
- Folders should be kept up to date. The latest version of all matrices and ingredients lists can be found on the 'Patient Catering, Special Diets and Steamplcility Documents' Teams page.
- Folders must include the allergen matrix and ingredients list of all items across all menus offered, including any local menus.
- Local procedure must be established where the stores team communicate unavailable or substituted products to the catering manager so that the allergen and ingredient information can be amended.

## Allergen Aware Menu

Where appropriate, the Allergy Aware Lunch & Supper Menu should be provided to the patient. This menu provides a list of dishes made without following ingredients:

- Milk
- Egg
- Egg & Milk
- Soya
- Nuts

It also has a list of meals that do not contain any of the 14 major allergens.

Gluten Free Dishes can be found on all menus using the code GF.



The most up to date and accurate allergen information can be found on the product packaging. The 14 major allergens will be highlighted in the ingredients list. This should be used where possible.

**REMEMBER:** if a patient has an allergy to a food item not in the 14 allergens, then it will not be highlighted in the ingredients list and care should be taken when reading these items.

# Providing Food Allergen Information [Example Flow Chart]

**It is a legal requirement for Medirest to provide patients with allergen information for all food and drink offered. There are 14 major allergens which must be declared to patients when asked.**

Patient asks you whether an item they wish to eat contains an allergen or what items are suitable for them to eat or drink



## WARD HOST TO CONTACT CATERING OFFICE

Call, visit or bleep the catering office or contact the helpdesk and provide patient name/initials, ward name, bed number, food allergies



## CATERING OFFICE TO OBTAIN AND PROVIDE ALLERGEN INFORMATION

Please ensure you understand the query and the allergy/allergies the patient has.

## CHECKING IF AN ITEM CONTAINS A CERTAIN ALLERGEN OR INGREDIENT

PROVIDING A LIST OF SUITABLE ITEMS TO THE PATIENT

One of the  
14 major allergens



## One of the 14 major allergens or any other allergens or ingredients

1. Check the product packaging where available
2. If packaging not available, then check item on source using PLU
3. If Source is not available, then use Master Allergen Folder
4. Provide information back to Ward Host or where possible, provide packaging to patient so they can see the ingredients list and decide suitability.

## Notes

- By law, all packed items will contain an ingredients list therefore packaging available at ward level can be provided directly to the patient so they can decide suitability for **any** allergies they may have.

Other allergens  
or ingredients



1. Obtain the ingredients list from the Master Allergen Folder or Teams
2. Photocopy or print the ingredients list
3. Add patient name/initials, ward, bed number and date to the top of the page
4. Provide patient with matrix so they can select the dishes that are suitable for their dietary needs.