

FOOD SAFETY DISCUSSION

Allergens Awareness for Hospitality Staff



WHAT WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT

In this Food Safety Discussion we will discuss allergens and the controls we are required to have in place to reduce the risk of allergic reactions in the Conference and Events environment.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Following this conversation you will:

- Understand the difference between an allergy and an intolerance
- Know the legal requirement and our responsibilities
- Learn what to do when a customer asks about allergens

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Allergy and Intolerance

People often get confused between an allergy and an intolerance but there are some clear differences. An allergy is a response by the body's immune system to a food / ingredient and even the slightest trace of some allergens, such as nuts, sesame seeds, eggs may cause adverse reactions, including potentially fatal anaphylactic shock. Whereas an intolerance is a non-immune system response to eating certain foods and it often happens because the body is unable to process it effectively.

The Legal Requirement

From December 2014 Food Information for Consumers Regulation 1169/2014 came into effect making it a legal requirement for food businesses to display in writing allergen information at the point of sale or display for all food bought and/or consumed in and out of home environment. The customer can request allergen information for any food or drink.

Conference and Events Service

Customers with allergies have a responsibility to ensure that they avoid foods that are high risk. We should always ask our customers to tell us if they have an allergy, it is their responsibility to ensure they check the food's information for specific allergens before they consume it.

Where a guest notifies of an allergy prior to the event:

- Firstly, the person taking the booking must ensure the catering team are informed of the allergy or intolerance.
- At the start of the event the front of house supervisor must make contact with the guest or the event organiser to identify the person with the allergy or intolerance and then ensure we hold the correct information.
- Chefs must prepare a separate plated dish wrapped and labelled with the details of the product e.g. "Chicken Salad (No nuts or gluten)".
- The front of house supervisor must retrieve the dish from the chef and take it directly to the customer, again confirming the product and ensuring it meets the guest's needs.

In all other circumstances:

- We must provide a menu for the event that should be in a visible location for the guests.
- The folder / menu should include all the allergen information of each dish and also include the disclaimer.

Don't:

- Assume the dish does not contain an allergen.
- Verbally check with your manager or chef if the dish contains an allergen.
- Advise the customer what they can have.

For further information refer to the Allergens Good Hygiene Practice Guide (GHP13).

IN AN EMERGENCY

If a customer with an allergy becomes ill or you suspect a customer may be suffering from an allergic reaction:

- Always follow your unit emergency procedures in the first instance.
- Where the situation requires call 999 to summon emergency assistance.
- Advise the emergency services that you suspect your customer may be suffering from anaphylaxis.
- Do not move the customer.
- Make sure that a member of the catering team remains with them until help arrives.

Know Your Allergens



Celery. This includes celery stalks, leaves, seeds and the root called celeriac. You can find celery in celery salt, salads, some meat products, soups and stock cubes.



Cereals containing gluten. Wheat, rye, barley and oats is often found in foods containing flour, such as some types of baking powder, batter, breadcrumbs, bread, cakes, couscous, meat products, pasta, pastry, sauces, soups and fried foods which are dusted with flour.



Crustaceans. Crabs, lobster, prawns and scampi are crustaceans. Shrimp paste, often used in Thai and south-east Asian curries or salads, is an ingredient to look out for.



Eggs. Eggs are often found in cakes, some meat products, mayonnaise, mousses, pasta, quiche, sauces and pastries or foods brushed or glazed with egg.



Fish. You will find this in some fish sauces, pizzas, relishes, salad dressings, stock cubes and Worcestershire sauce.



Lupin. Yes, lupin is a flower, but it's also found in flour! Lupin flour and seeds can be used in some types of bread, pastries and even in pasta.



Milk. Milk is a common ingredient in butter, cheese, cream, milk powders and yoghurt. It can also be found in foods brushed or glazed with milk, and in powdered soups and sauces.



Molluscs. These include mussels, land snails, squid and whelks, but can also be commonly found in oyster sauce or as an ingredient in fish stews.



Mustard. Liquid mustard, mustard powder and mustard seeds fall into this category. This ingredient can also be found in breads, curries, marinades, meat products, salad dressings, sauces and soups.



Nuts. Not to be mistaken with peanuts (which are actually a legume and grow underground), this ingredient refers to nuts which grow on trees, like cashew nuts, almonds and hazelnuts. You can find nuts in breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, nut powders (often used in Asian curries), stir-fried dishes, ice cream, marzipan (almond paste), nut oils and sauces.



Peanuts. Peanuts are actually a legume and grow underground, which is why it's sometimes called a groundnut. Peanuts are often used as an ingredient in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts, sauces (such as satay sauce), as well as in groundnut oil and peanut flour.



Sesame seeds. These seeds can often be found in bread (sprinkled on hamburger buns for example), breadsticks, houmous, sesame oil and tahini. They are sometimes toasted and used in salads.



Soyabean. Often found in bean curd, edamame beans, miso paste, textured soya protein, soya flour or tofu, soya is a staple ingredient in oriental food. It can also be found in desserts, ice cream, meat products, sauces and vegetarian products.



Sulphur dioxide (sometimes known as sulphites). This is an ingredient often used in dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots and prunes. You might also find it in meat products, soft drinks, vegetables as well as in wine and beer. If you have asthma, you have a higher risk of developing a reaction to sulphur dioxide.