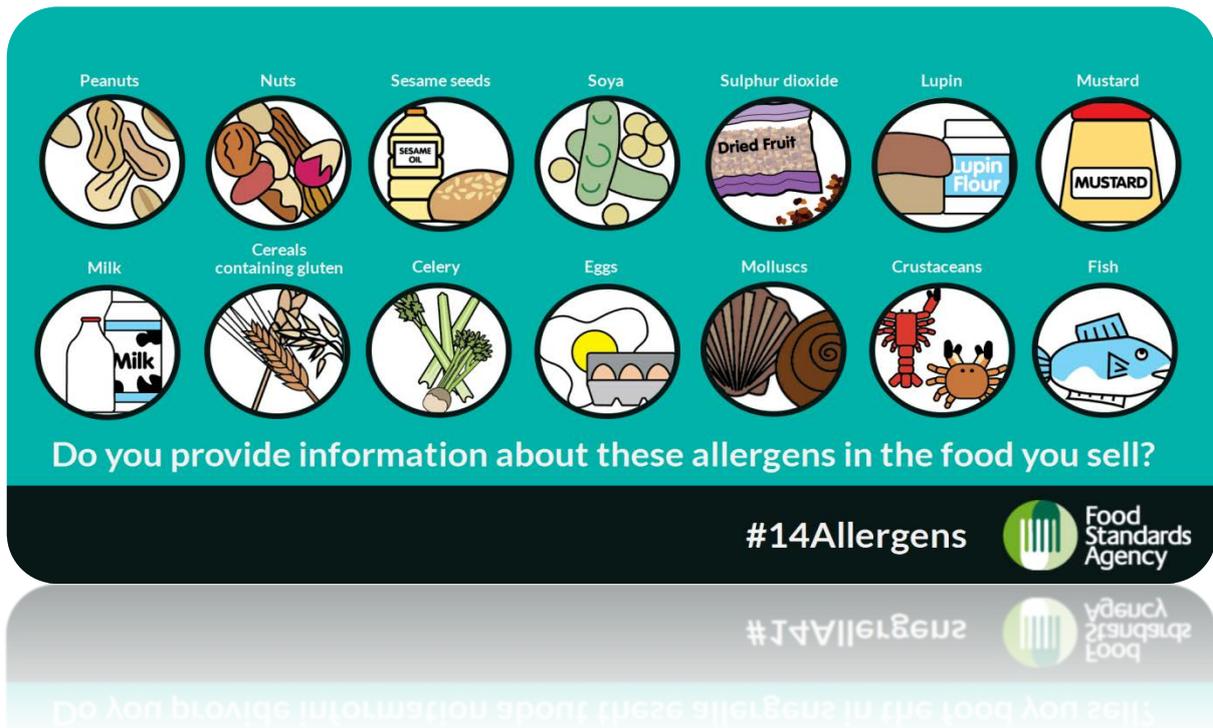




Food Allergen Management, Control and Communication for Caterers



East Riding of Yorkshire Council has put together the attached information to help food businesses put in place food allergen controls. The aim being to prevent avoidable mistakes from happening which may cause consumers with a food allergy to become seriously ill or even result in their death.

This information is designed as a working procedure that can be used as part of your HACCP plan or as a supplementary 'safe method' to the FSA Safer Food Better Business catering pack, to aid caterers to comply with food hygiene and food information regulations.

The information provided points out the caterer's legal obligations, things you should consider and provides space for you to write down what your business does to control food allergens and serve safe food to your allergic customers.

Unfortunately, a significant number of food businesses are still getting allergen controls wrong, such as;

- Offering "FREE FROM" allergen menu items, when in most cases caterers simply do not have the systems, procedures or facilities in place to be able to make these claims.
- Serving food allergen sufferers with an allergenic ingredient in their food even when the customers have stated that they are allergic to that ingredient.

- Preparing and serving food to allergen sufferers without having systems and arrangements in place to ensure that the food they serve is safe for that person's needs.
- Not having systems in place to prevent cross contamination of allergens on work surfaces, equipment and utensils within their food business.

You must ensure that when serving a customer with a food allergy that you get it right. Failure to do so means you are providing unsafe food to that customer, likely to result in someone becoming ill or even result in their death. The consequences for the continuing success of your food business could be equally as severe. Therefore, not surprisingly if you fail to put in place and implement adequate procedures to control allergens, at the very least this will impact on your premises hygiene rating.



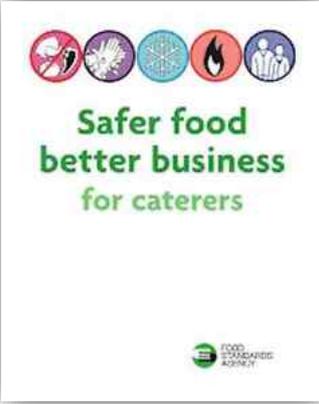
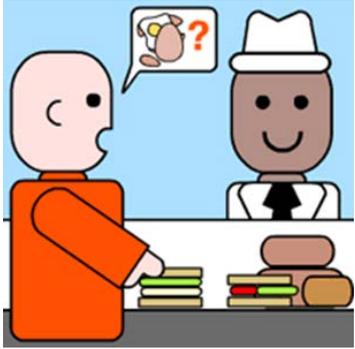
So use the attached SAFE METHOD sheets to ask yourself:

1. Do your customers find it 'easy to ask' for allergen or dietary information? Ask 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 is served, so there is a clear list of the ingredients used in all your menu items?
 - do you label takeaway meals clearly, so your customer can identify which dish is which, and what is suitable for those with food allergy?
3. Do you keep an accurate record of all the allergens in your meals? Do you have reminders in place to update your records 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 the 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?

FOOD ALLERGEN HAZARDS - SAFE METHOD

FOOD ALLERGENS MANAGEMENT, PROCEDURES AND TRAINING.		
What you must do!	What you should consider	What do you do?
<p>You must put in place procedures that ensure allergen controls are in place to protect your customers who suffer from food allergy.</p> <p>Dependant on the size and nature of the food business these procedures will usually need to be documented and recorded in some way.</p> <p>If your control measure will be that you are not going to serve allergic customers, your management system must demonstrate how and why you have decided upon this as your control method/measure.</p>	<p>Read around the subject of allergens, there is a lot of useful information available on the internet, list of resources on allergens is available on the back page.</p> <p>You may not wish to use this insert, but you must then devise a system of your own. You will need to ensure that you cover all the relevant key points of your food business and allergen control.</p> <p>If you decide not to serve customers with particular food allergies then you should consider why you have come to this decision and how you will explain it to the customer. You should ensure that all staff are aware this is your procedure, and how it is to be implemented.</p> <p>Note also that if you decide not to serve customers with food allergies, the law still requires you to be able to provide information about the allergenic ingredients in the food you supply, even to non-allergic customers.</p>	
<p>You must ensure that you and your staff have suitable supervision, instruction and training regarding food allergen hazards and the controls put in place to protect your customers and your business.</p> 	<p>Think about how you will include allergen management procedures and controls during the induction and supervision for any new staff members, whether working in the kitchen or front-of-house.</p> <p>There are a number of training courses available on allergens awareness and controls. You may want to put key members of staff on a training course and so they can carry out internal training with other staff members.</p> <p>Alternatively there is a lot of information available on the internet as well as other published resources that you can access. See the reference links of page 9.</p> <p>You should produce training records for key members of staff. You may want them to sign these to confirm that they understand their responsibilities.</p>	

FOOD ALLERGEN HAZARDS - SAFE METHOD

What you must do!	What you should consider	What do you do
<p>You must have arrangements for monitoring the implementation of your food allergen control procedures.</p> <p>You should also keep appropriate records of any corrective actions taken and any changes, including food allergen related complaints or incident</p> 	<p>When, where, who and how this is to be done.</p> <p>The types of things you may consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supplier changes - Ingredient lists - The Allergenic Ingredient matrix (if used) - Recipe cards - Live checks/test purchases - Staff induction and training - Allergenic order records - Complaint records - SFBB diary 	
<p>You must ensure that any catering managers, supervisors, or team leaders understand and engage with the implementation of measures put in place to control food allergen hazards.</p> 	<p>The role managers/supervisors play in ensuring staff implement procedures and are accountable for ensuring food supplied is safe for all customers, in particular those with food allergies.</p> <p>Regular review and verification of allergen controls and arrangements. Including checks on staff awareness, ingredient lists, menu recipe cards, complaints or incidents and related records.</p> <p>You may also want to test staff knowledge and understanding of food allergen control by using a mystery shopper who alleges they have a food allergen. This will also be a good way of checking your procedures are working.</p>	

FOOD ALLERGEN HAZARDS - SAFE METHOD

ALLERGEN INGREDIENT CONTROLS		
What you must do!	What you should consider	What do you do?
<p>You must have a system in place which enables you to accurately identify allergenic ingredients found in each menu item, including main ingredients secondary ingredients (such as those foods in composite pre-packaged products used in your recipes), and, any 'hidden contaminants', as identified by 'may contain' statements on pre-packaged products used in your recipes.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">   </div>	<p>You may want to use the FSA Food Allergen Matrix. However, the Matrix must be accurate and kept up to date. For instance if you change supplier or brand or use substitute ingredients.</p> <p>You may wish to keep the ingredients list of food packaging as your source of reference, again you must ensure this information is kept up to date.</p> <p>List on your menu against each dish what allergen ingredient is found in that meal.</p> <p>You may want to carry out what are commonly called live checks, this is when a customer states that they have an allergy to certain ingredient/s. You then check the ingredients list for all the components (for example bread, burger, paste, sauces etc.) that make up that meal as that allergen may be hidden in a component part of the meal.</p> <p>Do different chefs follow the same recipes for each dish? Should you use recipe cards to ensure consistency?</p>	
<p>You must ensure when an order is taken and a food allergy is declared by a customer that this information is relayed to the kitchen staff.</p>	<p>You might appoint a dedicated member of staff to deal with allergen orders, this could be the manager or the chef who will oversee the order.</p> <p>It is important that the member of staff who takes the allergen order talks through with the customer to find out how severely allergic the customer is? Also making the customer aware that said allergens is or isn't handled in the kitchen</p> <p>You may want to use a symbol on the food order form that highlights the allergen, so that this will alert the kitchen staff</p> <p>Creating a simple written allergy request procedure will help ensure a consistent approach by all staff. An example can be found on our web page links.</p>	

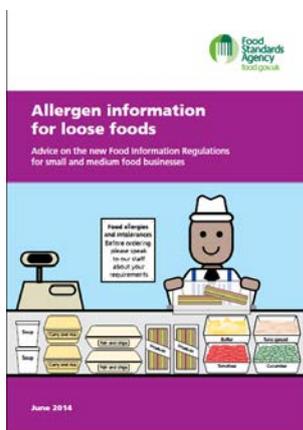
FOOD ALLERGEN HAZARDS - SAFE METHOD

What you must do!	What you should consider	What do you do?
<p>You must ensure at the point of service that any food which has been prepared specifically for an allergic customer meets their requirements and is safe.</p>	<p>Consider what arrangements you will make to ensure the allergic customer receives the right dish.</p> <p>To avoid confusion and cross-contamination it is likely that the meal should be served/delivered separate from that of other diners.</p> <p>It is good practice to make a verbal confirmatory statement about the any specially prepared menu item, such as: “...this dish does not contain ‘<i>x allergenic food</i>’ as an intended ingredient, but may still be liable to contamination due to the nature of our business”.</p>	

ALLERGEN CONTAMINATION AND CROSS-CONTAMINATION CONTROLS

What you must do!	What you should consider	What do you do?
<p>You must only serve safe food. This means that when a customer declares a food allergy, then the food you supply them must not contain that allergenic food ingredient.</p> <p>Having identified the allergenic food ingredients used in your food business, you must consider steps required to avoid their unintended presence or undue cross-contamination in menu items provided to your customers.</p>	<p><u>Premises and Equipment</u></p> <p>Consider the use of a separate area to prepare a meal without a specified allergenic ingredient, a designated member of staff, the use of separate/ dedicated equipment such as an allergen free chopping board.</p> <p>Ensure that all equipment used has been thoroughly cleaned.</p> <p>Ensure the use of a clean cloth, to clean down work surfaces adequately prior to preparing the dish without a specified allergenic ingredient.</p> <p><u>Purchase and Delivery</u></p> <p>Do you purchase from reputable suppliers?</p> <p>How do you make sure that deliveries do not pose the risk of cross contamination of allergens?</p> <p>Do loose foods come into your business, such as bread buns that may contain sesame seeds, celery that was delivered in the same bag as other loose foods etc.</p>	

FOOD ALLERGEN HAZARDS - SAFE METHOD



How do staff deal with a loose food spillage?

Do staff check to make sure that the same branded products are delivered, and if there has been a change of product are these assessed for allergens?

Storage

Are foods decanted into containers?

Are containers clearly labelled?

If the containers were previously used to store other foods, were the containers adequately cleaned between use?

Preparation and Handling

Have staff thoroughly washed their hands or do they wear gloves, prior to preparing the dish without a specified allergenic ingredient?

Is the staff member who prepares the dish wearing clean clothing that has not been potentially contaminated with a food allergen?

Is the same equipment being used to prepare the dish without a specified allergenic ingredient as an ordinary meal; such as toasters or a fryer?

Is the same spoon (or ladle) being used to handle different ingredients, especially when preparing a dish without a specified allergenic ingredient?

Service and Front-of-House

Ensure that a meal without a specified allergenic ingredient is served straight away so you reduce the risk of the food becoming cross-contaminated with an allergen.

How is the meal without a specified allergenic ingredient served to the customer?

If you do deliveries is the meal without a specified allergenic ingredient you provide in sealed packaging and protected from other foods?

FOOD ALLERGEN HAZARDS - SAFE METHOD

	<p>If you use a thermal bag to transport food is it clean and free of food debris?</p> <p>Is any meal especially prepared without a specified allergenic ingredient clearly labelled as such if packaged, e.g. takeaway meal containers?</p>	
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ALLERGEN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

What you must do!	What you should consider	What do you do?
<p>You must ensure that you <u>do not</u> declare products as being "FREE FROM" an allergenic ingredient or contaminant; unless you are able to fulfil all the strict and onerous control and validation requirements needed for 'FREE FROM' foods.</p> <p>Most catering situations don't allow for adequate cross-contamination controls to be implemented to make it possible to guarantee a menu item is 'FREE FROM' even if it has been made with pre-packaged 'FREE FROM' ingredients.</p>	<p>You may wish to cater menu items using pre-packaged and declared 'FREE FROM' ingredients. In which case, staff and customers should understand that whilst steps may be taken to avoid cross-contamination. Absence cannot be guaranteed once any 'FREE FROM' ingredient packaging is opened and used in the kitchen.</p> <p>You may use suitable menu or sign wording or statements to achieve this, such as: "...<i>made with 'x' allergen FREE ingredients...</i>"</p> <p>For example: <i>'...made with gluten free ingredients...'</i></p>	
<p>You must have a clear and reliable way of providing allergen information to customers.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">FOOD ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please speak to a member of staff about the ingredients in our dishes before placing your order.</p> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">We follow good hygiene practices in our kitchen however, whilst a dish may not identify a specific allergen as an actual ingredient, due to the wide range of ingredients used in our kitchen, foods may be at risk of cross contamination by other ingredients. Please ask our staff for further information.</p> </div>	<p>Where you choose to "signpost" customers to allergen information, this should be provided at the point where the customer makes their order i.e. at the counter or till point, on your menu or another place which is easily noticed by a customer.</p> <p>You will need to provide a statement such as shown here: </p> <p>You may want to list the allergens handled within the food business to make any food allergy sufferers aware.</p> <p>You may need to consider telephone and internet orders and how you give allergen information to those customers.</p>	

FOOD ALLERGEN HAZARDS - SAFE METHOD

	<p>Do printed flyer menus include allergen information and are they kept accurate and up to date?</p> <p>If you do buffet or event catering you will need to consider how you will supply food which is safe for those with food allergies or special dietary requirements, differently from other diners.</p> <p>You may want to label foods by listing the ingredients; and/or, serve food allergic customers separately.</p> <p>You may want to use colour coded plates to indicate allergen ingredient free menu items.</p> <p>How do staff supervise any self-serve or buffet food to ensure cross-contamination hazards are controlled, such as avoiding the mixed use of serving utensils?</p>	
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Provide further information here and overleaf:

Reference links to further advice and guidance:

- <https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/food-services/>
- <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses#pre-packed-and-non-prepacked-foods>
- <https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk>
- <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>
- https://www.fdf.org.uk/corporate_pubs/brc-free-from-guidance.pdf
- <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/food-allergens-and-intolerance>

Provide further information here:

FOOD ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

**Please speak to a member of staff about
the ingredients in our dishes before
placing your order.**

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