

Safe method:

Customers – food allergies

It is important to know what to do if you serve a customer who says they have a food allergy, because these allergies can be life-threatening.



Pre-packed food

Safety point

If someone asks if a pre-packed food contains a certain ingredient, show them the ingredients list and any warnings on the label. **Never guess.**

Why?

Some foods can contain ingredients that you might not expect them to contain. It is very important for people with a severe food allergy to check the label on all pre-packed foods.

Unwrapped food

If you sell unwrapped foods or foods you wrap yourself, you need to take extra care to be aware of what ingredients they contain.

If someone has a severe allergy, they can react to even a tiny amount of the food they are sensitive to. So it is very important for them to know exactly what is in a food.

Keep a copy of the ingredient information for any foods that you sell unwrapped or wrap yourself. If a food contains one of the ingredients listed below, try to mention it in the description of the food, e.g. chocolate and almond croissant.

This is so you and your staff can check the ingredients if asked by a customer. Clear descriptions help people with food allergies to spot foods that are not suitable for them to eat.

When handling unwrapped foods, make sure counter tops and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned first. Make sure staff wash their hands thoroughly before starting the task.

This is to prevent small amounts of the food that a person is allergic to from getting onto another food accidentally.

If you have a self-service area, make sure separate containers and utensils are used for different foods and they are never mixed up. If unwrapped foods contain one of the ingredients listed below, keep them separate from other foods, e.g. keep bread rolls with sesame seeds away from plain rolls.

These are some of the foods that people can be allergic to:

Type of food

What to look out for

Peanuts



Peanuts, also called groundnuts, are found in many foods, including sauces, cakes and desserts.

Nuts



People with nut allergy can react to many types of nut, including walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews and pecans. Nuts are found in many foods, including sauces, desserts, bread, marzipan and ice cream.

Type of food	What to look out for
<p>Lupin</p> 	<p>People with a peanut allergy can often react to lupin as well. Lupin can come in the form of either seeds or flour that are used in breads, pastries, pies, waffles, pancakes and doughnuts.</p>
<p>Milk</p> 	<p>People with milk allergy need to avoid foods containing milk, yoghurt, cream, cheese, butter and other milk products. Watch out for products glazed with milk and ready-made products containing milk powder.</p>
<p>Eggs</p> 	<p>Eggs are used in many foods including cakes, mousses, sauces, mayonnaise, pasta and quiche. Sometimes egg is used to bind meat products, such as burgers.</p>
<p>Fish</p> 	<p>Some types of fish, especially anchovies, are used in salad dressings, sauces, relishes and on pizzas.</p>
<p>Shellfish</p> 	<p>People who are allergic to shellfish often need to avoid all types, including scampi, prawns, mussels, oysters, cockles, scallops, crab and squid.</p>
<p>Soya</p> 	<p>Soya comes in different forms, for example, tofu (or beancurd), soya flour and textured soya protein. It is found in many foods, including ice cream, sauces, desserts, meat products and vegetarian products such as 'veggie burgers'.</p>
<p>Gluten</p> 	<p>People who have gluten intolerance (also called Coeliac disease) need to avoid cereals such as wheat, rye and barley and foods made from these. Wheat flour is used in many foods such as bread, pasta, cakes, pastry and meat products.</p>
<p>Sesame seeds</p> 	<p>Sesame seeds are often used on bread and breadsticks. Tahini (sesame paste) is also used in a number of foods, such as houmous.</p>
<p>Celery</p> 	<p>People who are allergic to celery can react to celeriac (the root of the plant), celery stalks and leaves. Celeriac and celery are sometimes used in salads and soups, or served as a vegetable. Watch out for celery salt and celery seeds, which are used as a seasoning in lots of foods, such as soups and meat products.</p>
<p>Mustard</p> 	<p>People who are allergic to mustard will react to any food that comes from the mustard plant, including liquid mustard, mustard powder, the leaves, seeds and flowers, sprouted mustard seeds and mustard oil. Mustard is sometimes used in salad dressings, marinades, soups, sauces, curries and meat products.</p>
<p>Sulphur dioxide</p> 	<p>Some people with asthma can react to sulphur dioxide. This is used as a preservative in a wide range of foods, particularly meat products such as sausages, soft drinks, and dried fruit and vegetables. Sulphur dioxide is also found in wine and beer.</p>