

Ordering allergy-safe food

Whether you're eating out, or ordering in, here's our advice on allergy-safe food

When you plan to eat out or order a takeaway, always check the menu online or call ahead to ask what their policy is on food allergy and intolerance.

Be clear about your allergy or intolerance when making your order and give examples of the foods that give you a reaction.

If you don't feel the person you're speaking to understands your needs, ask for the manager or someone who can help more.

You can ask:

- does the food business offer meals that are suitable for you?
- if not, are the staff able to make a safe dish for you?
- how is the food handled in the kitchen - is there a chance of allergen cross-contamination from cooking equipment or ingredients?
- has there been a last-minute recipe change or ingredient substitution?

Be careful if the restaurant serves complex dishes, as allergens can be less obvious or hidden in complicated recipes.

Food businesses must offer you allergen information but are not required to offer you an alternative meal to suit your need.

If you have any doubt about the staff understanding the importance of your dietary needs, do not eat there.

Allergen advice when eating at a restaurant

When you arrive, after calling ahead, speak to your server or the manager. Be clear about your food allergy or intolerance and share your previous conversation with the staff when booking the restaurant.

Check the meal choices are suitable for you or that they can make changes to suit your dietary needs.

Remind them to be careful of cross-contamination or added allergens from glazes, garnishes, sauces, cooking oils, and to handle your meal with care.

If you have any doubt about the staff understanding the importance of your dietary needs, do not eat there.

Allergen advice when ordering a takeaway

Ordering a takeaway meal is considered [distance selling](#). With distance selling allergen information must be made available to you at two stages. First is before the purchase of the food is completed (at the point of sale). The information can be in writing, through a website, catalogue, or menu, or orally by phone. The second time is when the food is delivered.

When ordering for several people, make sure to ask the business to label each meal and container, so that you know which order is safe for you.