

# Food allergens: Changes to the rules

## Food allergens can be life threatening.

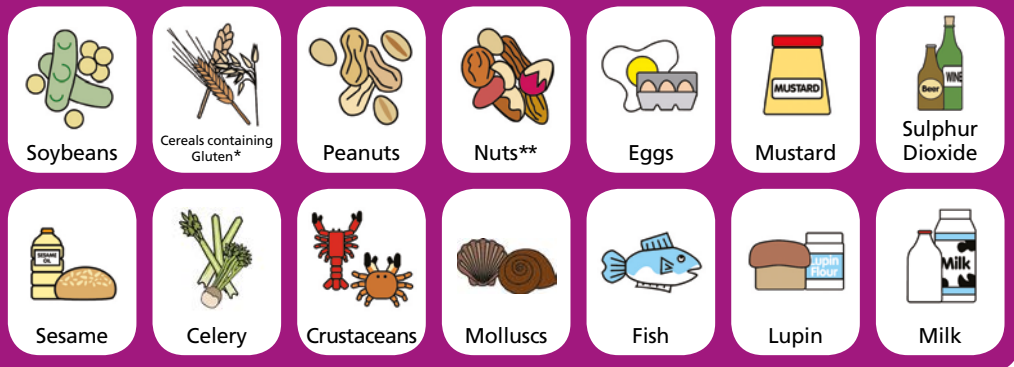
The only way people can manage a food allergy is to avoid the foods that make them ill. An oversight on your part - such as serving someone a food they are allergic to - can damage the reputation of your business as well as cause serious harm to your customer.

Foods allergens cannot be removed by cooking, which is why it is essential to practise good kitchen hygiene, as well as careful separation, storage and labelling of ingredients when preparing foods.

**From 13 December, 2014 all food businesses will need to provide information about 14 allergenic ingredients used in food sold or provided by them.**

## Food Allergens

These are the 14 allergens that you need to be aware of, and provide information for, if they are in the food you sell or provide.



Consumers may ask about other ingredients, but these are the ones you have a legal obligation to know and give information about, if they are used in the food you sell or provide.

\* You will need to specify the cereal containing gluten that is in the food, for example: wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan), rye, barley, oats and their hybridised strains.

\*\* You will need to specify the nut that is in the food, for example: almond, hazelnut, walnut, cashew, pecan nut, Brazil nut, pistachio nut and macadamia nut (also known as Queensland nut)

# Informing your customers

You have to supply information for every item on your menu that contains any of the 14 allergens as ingredients. The information can be supplied, for example, via any of these methods:

- On a menu
- On a chalkboard/display
- In an information pack or allergen folder
- By a member of staff, verbally

If the information is provided verbally, you must make it clear to your customers how and where they can obtain the allergen information (for example, by putting up a sign that says they can ask a member of staff for allergen information). An example notice, to help you in signposting the customer, can be downloaded free from [www.food.gov.uk/allergen-resources](http://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-resources)

Also, there must be a way for the information to be:

- Checked by others
- Confirmed as accurate
- The same every time, for specific products

The Food Standard Agency provide templates to list all allergen information for menu dishes: [www.food.gov.uk/allergen-resources](http://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-resources)

You must also provide allergen information when handling orders over the phone or online. We suggest you:

- prompt your customer to inform you if they have an allergy or intolerance when making their order. The prompt could be on your takeaway menu or website, or delivered by the person taking the order.
- Provide allergen information on your menu, website or by the person taking the order (it's good practice to have a tick-box on the order form to say that allergen information has been offered).
- Follow up the allergen information in writing when the order is delivered. For example, a sticky label stating the dish name and allergen information on the lid is suitable.

The change in the law means that you will no longer be able to say that you don't know what allergens are in the food you serve. You are also not allowed to say that all the foods you serve could contain an allergen.

**You need to know what is in the food you provide.**

## More Advice

For more information on the changes, and what you need to do, visit: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide>

For free allergen resources, templates and information, visit: [www.food.gov.uk/allergen-resources](http://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-resources)