

FOOD ALLERGEN AWARENESS

It is estimated that 9 million adults and 6 million children, or approximately 4% of the population, have a food allergy. Food allergies are an immune system reaction that can range from mild to life-threatening.

While operators are not required to offer allergen-free foods, managers and employees are required to have basic knowledge about food allergens - including knowing the eight major food allergens and describing common symptoms of an allergic food reaction. If operators choose to serve allergen-free food, they must prepare the food in a safe manner for the customer. Using the same food preparation equipment (e.g., cutting boards, knives, fryers), serving utensils or trays, gloves, thermometers, storage containers, cleaning implements (e.g., brushes, wiping cloths), etc., without washing, rinsing and sanitizing them between foods can result in trace amounts of a food allergen being served to an allergic customer. For people with severe food allergies, there must be no contact with the allergen food at any time.

Symptoms:

Severe food allergy symptoms can include: swelling of the lips, tongue and/or throat; trouble swallowing; shortness of breath or wheezing; turning blue; feeling faint; loss of consciousness; chest pain; and weak pulse.

Mild symptoms can include: hives; coughing; reddening of the skin; itching; nasal congestion; sneezing; vomiting; cramps; and diarrhea. Reactions can occur within seconds or take several hours. If you believe someone may be having an allergic reaction to food, call 911 immediately.

Although there are over 200 known food allergens, the eight major food allergens account for 90% of allergic food reactions.

EIGHT MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS	
Allergen	Examples of foods containing the allergen and common aliases (not a complete list)
Milk	butter, cheese, yogurt, cream, half and half, sour cream, sherbet, custard, casein, caseinate, lactalbumin, lactoferrin, lactulose, whey, curds
Eggs	mayonnaise, albumin, conalbumin, globulin, lecithin, livetin, lysozyme, meringue, ovalbumin, ovoglobulin, ovalactohydrolyzed proteins, ovomacroglobulin, ovomucin, ovomucoid, ovotranferin, ovovitellin, silico-albuminate, vitellin, yolk
Fish	anchovies, bass, catfish, cod, flounder, grouper, haddock, hake, herring, mahi mahi, perch, pike, pollock, salmon, scrod, sole, snapper, swordfish, tilapia, trout, tuna
Crustacean shellfish	crab, lobster, shrimp, crayfish
Tree nuts	almond, beechnut, Brazil nut, bush nut, cashew, chestnut, coconut, filbert, ginko nut, hazelnut, lichee nut, macadamia nut, pecan, pine nut, pistachio, shea nut, walnut
Peanuts	beer nuts, ground nuts, monkey nuts, arachis oil
Wheat	soy sauce, semolina, durum wheat, food starch, kamut, spelt, wheat protein, durham, triticale, rye, barley
Soybeans	edamame, miso, tempeh, tofu, lecithin, textured vegetable protein, modified food protein, soy albumin, soy fiber, soy flour, soy grits, soy milk, soy nuts, soy protein P34, soy sprouts

Packaged food items that require an ingredient label must list any major food allergens in plain language (milk, fish, tree nuts, etc.).