

# IS YOUR BUSINESS 'ALLERGY AWARE'?

**This is important information about food allergens that you need to know. You will be deemed to have read and understood this fact sheet and your obligations regarding allergens unless you contact Council within the next 14 days.**

## WHAT ARE ALLERGENS?

Food allergens are typically naturally occurring proteins in foods, or derivatives of them, that cause abnormal immune responses or allergic reactions.

There is currently no cure for food allergies. The only way to manage a food allergy is to avoid all foods containing the allergen.

## WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS?

Sesame, wheat, tree nuts, cow's milk (dairy), peanut, fish, egg, crustacea (shellfish), soy and lupin. These food groups are responsible for around 90% of all allergic reactions.

## WHO DO ALLERGENS AFFECT?

Food allergens can affect people of any age. In NSW alone food allergies occur in about 1 in 20 children, and 2 in 100 adults. It is also believed that the rate of people affected is increasing.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A FOOD ALLERGY?

Allergic reactions vary, with the most common mild-to-moderate symptoms including the swelling of lips, eyes, face, hives or welts, tingling mouth or gastrointestinal discomfort (including abdominal pain and vomiting). More severe **life threatening reactions** (called anaphylaxis) may include difficult or noisy breathing, swelling of tongue, tightness of throat, wheezing or persistent cough, loss of consciousness and collapsing, or in young children becoming pale/floppy.

## WHAT DO I DO IF A CUSTOMER HAS AN ALLERGIC REACTION?

Call triple zero (000) immediately.

## WHAT DOES MY BUSINESS HAVE TO DO?

The business must ensure that staff, be it food handlers or wait staff, have sufficient skills and knowledge so that they are able to provide accurate information about allergens in the food your business prepares and serves if/when requested.

## WHAT ARE MY LEGAL OBLIGATIONS?

If a customer informs your business that they have an allergy, take the matter seriously and know how to address the customer's concerns. The business may be legally liable if it does not provide accurate allergen information when asked, or if the customer was told a food did not contain an allergen, but it did.

## IS MY BUSINESS 'ALLERGY AWARE'?

- Are your staff aware of their obligations to declare allergens when asked?
- Can your business confidently answer customers' questions in relation to menu items containing allergens?
- Does your business check all the ingredients used in menu items?
  - Are menu items which contain common allergens noted?
- How do food handlers avoid cross-contamination (particularly in relation to allergens)?
- Do staff know how to handle an allergic reaction if one occurs at your business?
- Do staff know who to talk to or how to check whether a particular allergen is in a food?
- Do staff know the difference between a dietary preference and an allergen risk?
- Are your staff aware that even the smallest trace of a food that a person is allergic to can cause an allergic reaction?
- HINT - always have one person on duty who is responsible for allergen communication



# IS YOUR BUSINESS 'ALLERGY AWARE'?

**IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO ONE OR MORE OF THESE QUESTIONS YOUR BUSINESS MAY NOT BE 'ALLERGY AWARE'!**

A great starting point is the attached 'allergy aware checklist' prepared by the NSW Food Authority.

## WHERE SHOULD I START?

- [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/resource-centre?t=1&c=0,0,e4e73753-a89d-40c5-8d02-9778e71862b&lang=0&](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/resource-centre?t=1&c=0,0,e4e73753-a89d-40c5-8d02-9778e71862b&lang=0&)
- [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/\\_Documents/retail/allergy\\_aware\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retail/allergy_aware_checklist.pdf)
- [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/\\_Documents/retail/the\\_usual\\_suspects\\_poster.pdf](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retail/the_usual_suspects_poster.pdf)

## WHERE CAN I/MY STAFF UNDERTAKE TRAINING?

Free online training for food handlers is available at:

- National Allergy Strategy at [www.foodallergytraining.org.au](http://www.foodallergytraining.org.au)
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services [dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/index.php/component/topics/topic/food-allergens](http://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/index.php/component/topics/topic/food-allergens)

## WHERE CAN I GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO ENSURE MY BUSINESS IS 'ALLERGY AWARE'?

Information on food allergens and online training options are also available on Council's website:

[www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Business\\_Projects/Business\\_Economic\\_Development/Regulations\\_for\\_Specific\\_Businesses\\_incl\\_Food/Food\\_business/Food\\_Allergy](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Business_Projects/Business_Economic_Development/Regulations_for_Specific_Businesses_incl_Food/Food_business/Food_Allergy)

## MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:

- NSW Food Authority  
[www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)  
1300 552 406
- Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia  
[www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)  
1300 728 000

## PLEASE NOTE:

Should you or your staff have any questions regarding the information provided, or remain unclear of the businesses' obligations in relation to allergens, please contact Council's Environmental Health Team for assistance.



PEANUTS



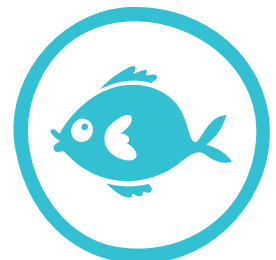
NUTS



EGGS



DAIRY



FISH



CRUSTACEAN



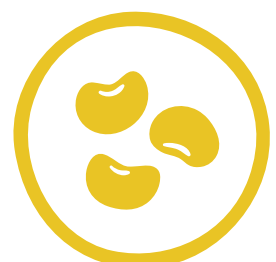
SESAME



SOYA



GLUTEN



LUPINS