

Food Service Employee Allergen Awareness

Symptoms of food allergies (allergic reactions) occur when individuals consume one or more food allergens. Symptoms are not universal and do not present uniformly in everyone. Various factors such as the amount of food allergen consumed will determine the severity of the reaction. Food allergens present a serious health risk and may even cause death if not handled cautiously. Taking simple actions can assure that you and your customers are fully informed, and that everyone has a safe experience.

9 Major Food Allergens



PEANUTS



CRUSTACEANS



EGGS



TREE NUTS



WHEAT



MILK



FISH



SOY



SESAME

Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction

- Hives
- Flushed skin or rash
- Coughing or wheezing
- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of face, tongue, and/or lip
- Dizziness and/or faintness
- Loss of consciousness
- Tingling or itchy sensation in mouth
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Swelling of throat and/or vocal cords

Response to an Allergic Reaction

Call 911 and seek emergency medical attention!

- Tell the person experiencing any of these symptoms to stop eating the food immediately.
- If the person has emergency medication and needs to use it, trained food service employees may assist the person to administer the medication.



Procedures for Preventing an Allergic Reaction

Food Service Employee Awareness:

- Listen to the customer's allergen request.
- Familiarize yourself with the menu.
- Be able to identify all major food allergens used in the establishment.
- Read all labels.
- Take all necessary allergen training.

Prevent Cross-Contact of Allergens:

- Use different cutting surfaces before and after handling food with allergens.
- Clean and sanitize equipment and food contact surfaces before and after handling food with allergens.
- Wash hands and change gloves before and after handling potential food allergens.

Food Allergy Risk Factors

- Cross-contact of allergens with food not containing allergens
- Age
- Lack of menu information
- Asthma
- Family history
- Lack of knowledge
- Other allergies