

Aide memoire – Allergens – Suggested Phrases

Suggested Phrases: Allergen Cross Contamination	
1	Until you look in detail at your food handling practices for the preparation of an allergy-free meal and can eliminate all risks of allergen contamination you should inform your customers that you cannot guarantee food you prepare will be totally free from allergens.
2	Develop a written procedure for the preparation and service of “allergy-free” foods. The procedure should cover all of the precautions necessary to eliminate the risks from allergen cross-contamination.
3	<p>Staff were not aware of -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of allergens in the foods you prepare • The control measures necessary to prevent cross contamination during the preparation of allergy-free foods <p>Provide allergen awareness training for all your staff. The Food Standards Agency has an online training tool - www.food.uk/allergy-training</p>
4	<p>Provide air-tight containers for the storage of ingredients.</p> <p>Provide lids to containers to reduce the risk of contamination from other ingredients.</p>
5	Clearly label all ingredient containers so you know which allergens are in them. Keep the original packaging with the ingredients.
6	Avoid re-using containers for different ingredients.
7	If you have to re-use containers for different ingredients always wash them thoroughly before re-using them.
8	<p>Provide dedicated scoops for each individual ingredient to minimise the risk of cross contamination between ingredients.</p> <p>Do not use them for serving other ingredients as this could cause cross contamination.</p>
9	Always make sure scoops and utensils are thoroughly washed before re-using them.
10	<p>Allergy-free foods should be prepared, either;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a physically separate area from where other foods are prepared, Or • At a different time from when other foods are prepared. All surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned using separate cloths before preparation starts.
11	One option to minimise the risk of allergen cross contamination is to buy-in ready prepared “allergy-free” meals. Care must still be taken to avoid contamination when handling these foods.
12	Make sure all equipment such as containers, dishes, pans, measuring cups, scales and other utensils are washed in a dishwasher or with detergent at high temperatures to remove trace allergens.

Suggested Phrases: Allergen Cross Contamination (cont'd)

13	<p>When asked to prepare a dish that does not contain any allergens, make sure that staff know how to clean work surfaces, equipment, and utensils thoroughly before preparing that dish.</p> <p>Always use separate cloths.</p> <p>Make sure staff wash their hands thoroughly before preparing food.</p> <p>Hands can be a source of allergen cross-contamination</p>
14	<p>Make sure staff wash their hands before starting to prepare an “allergy-free” meal.</p>
15	<p>To reduce the risk of a prepared “allergy-free” meal being exposed to a risk of cross contamination you should serve it immediately to the customer.</p>
16	<p>Although you have identified which allergenic ingredients are intentionally included in the foods you prepare you must as part of your food safety procedures, look in detail at handling practices and procedures for preparing foods specifically for customers with allergies.</p> <p>Cross-contamination of foods with allergens (i.e. the unintended inclusion of an allergen in food) could occur at any stage. Small amounts of allergen in food could cause severe reactions and could even be fatal.</p> <p>Therefore you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise staff awareness about allergens in foods; how cross contamination can happen and how it must be avoided. 2. Look at all stages of storing, handling, preparing and serving “allergy-free” food to see where cross-contamination could occur 3. Prevent cross contamination; by such things as separation of allergenic ingredients, separate preparation areas, thorough cleaning practices, effective hand washing practices etc.... 4. Develop a written procedure for how you will deal with customer requests to provide “allergy-free” foods. 5. Train staff in safe practices and procedures to prevent cross contamination. <p>The guide “Food Allergen Information and Controls for Caterers” will help you to do this.</p> <p>Copy left at the premises.</p> <p>Until you have completed this “risk-assessment” and can demonstrate the safe preparation of an allergy-free meal you should not provide “allergy-free” food.</p>
17	<p>If after completing a risk-assessment of your food handling procedures you decide that you cannot safely eliminate the risks from cross-contamination you must tell your customers.</p> <p>One suggested phrase you could use is:</p> <p>“We have looked in detail at our kitchen procedures and although we have taken steps to control the unintended presence of allergenic ingredients in our food we cannot fully guarantee this.”</p>

Further Information -

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have a range of useful information on their website -

www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/allergen-resources