



Stockport School

Food Allergies Policy

Adverse Reactions to Food

There are many different ways that the body can react adversely to foodstuffs. Some are predictable and will occur in everyone to a lesser or greater extent, e.g. the effects of foodstuffs containing caffeine or alcohol, or the results of eating food contaminated with micro-organisms which causes food poisoning. Others are more unpredictable because they only occur in certain individuals, and different amounts of the substances have different effects.

Food Intolerance occurs when there is a genuine and repeatable reaction to a particular food.

There are two types of food intolerance

1. **Metabolic defects** where individuals have abnormally low levels of the enzymes that digest certain foods and so they are unable to tolerate those foods. For example if a person is deficient in the enzyme lactase they are unable to digest lactose, the natural sugar found in milk and milk products. This is referred to as lactose intolerance. This kind of intolerance does not involve the immune system and is generally not life threatening although it can produce unpleasant symptoms.
2. **Food allergy** which occurs when an individual's immune system has become sensitised to a particular allergen in a food which then causes an allergic reaction every time the food is eaten.

All staff responsible for providing food to staff, students and visitors, particularly catering staff, need to be aware of these conditions and follow agreed procedures to ensure that everyone can eat the food served or given to them without the risk of potentially serious effects.

Food Allergies

Food allergies are becoming more common and are capable of causing serious and even fatal reactions in sensitive individuals. Allergic reactions can occur within minutes of the suspect food being consumed; other symptoms can come on after a delay of a few hours.

A serious reaction to food allergens is anaphylactic shock - it can cause severe and life threatening reactions which without rapid treatment (an injection of adrenaline, normally administered by an 'epipen'), can result in death.

Just a handful of foods and their derivatives are to blame for 90% of allergic reactions in the U.K. These foods are referred to as the "big" 8

1. Peanuts
2. Tree nuts such as walnuts, almonds, Brazil nuts and hazelnuts.
3. Milk and milk products
4. Eggs
5. Fish
6. Shellfish
7. Wheat
8. Soya

Children are most commonly allergic to milk, peanuts, eggs, soya and wheat. Adults tend to be more prone to be allergic to peanuts, nuts, fish, shellfish and wheat.

Reactions can be triggered by very small amounts of the allergen, sometimes less than 1 milligram. It is therefore important to avoid, where possible, the use of allergenic foods that are more likely to have life-threatening consequences, and those that affect a higher proportion of people with allergies.

Where it is not possible to avoid the use of an allergen, it is particularly important that steps are taken to prevent non-allergenic food being contaminated during storage, preparation or service.

The following 12 allergens and their derivatives can trigger an allergic reaction. They must, by law, be listed on food labels

1. Nuts and Seeds

- Tree nuts such as Almonds, Brazil nuts, Cashew nuts, Hazelnuts (also known as cob nut or filberts), Macadamia nuts, Pecan nuts, Pistachio nuts, Queensland nuts, and Walnuts

Oils Made From Tree Nuts

- Walnut oil, other nut oils and vegetable oils containing a small proportion of nut oils.
- First press (virgin) oils are believed to be more likely to contain the substance that is harmful to nut allergy sufferers.

Other Common sources of nuts and nut products:

- Nut butters
- Nut essences and flavourings
- Biscuits, cakes, pastries, gateaux
- Marzipan, frangipane and almond paste,
- Speciality breads
- Ice-cream, desserts and puddings, dessert garnishes, yoghurt
- Cereal bars, confectionery, crisps, savoury snacks
- Breakfast cereals, muesli
- Savoury dips such as houmous
- Sweet & savoury spreads
- Stuffing
- Vegetarian products including prepared meals, curries, nut loaf
- Prepared salads, composite salads (e.g. Waldorf)
- Salad dressings, including mayonnaise
- Speciality cheeses
- Chinese, Indian and Thai dishes and 'cook-in' sauces
- In the carrier base of flavourings and vitamins
- As a minority ingredient in bouillon and soups
- Worcester sauce (some bands contain walnuts)

NB Coconut allergy is rare in the UK, but it can cause reactions (including anaphylaxis) in people who are sensitive. A small number of people who are allergic to nuts also react to coconut. Some people who are allergic to latex may react to coconut too.

2. Peanuts and Peanut Oil

Peanuts are actually legumes, not nuts. They are also known as Ground nuts, Monkey nuts or Earth nuts. Approximately 25% of people with peanut allergy also react to tree nuts.

- Peanuts are the most likely foods to cause severe anaphylactic reactions and are the most common cause of fatal food allergy
- Heat treatment, especially roasting increases the allergic effect of peanuts

Derivatives include:

- Arachis oil (Peanut oil, Groundnut oil)
- Traces of peanut oil can also be used in mixed vegetable oils
- Hydrolysed vegetable protein food additives: E471; E472 (a-e inclusive) lecithin
- Peanut butter
- Satay sauce
- Peanut flour
- Peanut protein products

3. Sesame Seeds

- Sesame seeds, Sesame oil, Sesame seed paste, Tahini, Houmous, Halva, Furikake and Gomashio (oriental seasonings)
- Sesame seeds are common on burger buns and breads, as garnishes in vegetables and salads
- Sesame oil is often added to oriental dishes.

4. Cereals

- Cereals containing gluten include wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt and kamut
- Derivatives include flour, starches, bran, bread, breadcrumbs, semolina, cous cous, hydrolysed vegetable protein (if made from wheat)

5. Crustaceans and Shellfish

- All species of crustaceans, e.g. lobster, crab, prawns, shrimps and langoustine

6. Fish

- Fish (all species), fish extracts, fish sauce, fish oils, fish paste, Worcester sauce (some brands), Omega-3 rich oils derived from fish

7. Eggs

- Eggs from all birds need to be avoided
- Egg powder, dried egg, pasteurised egg, albumin (egg white), egg glaze, mayonnaise, meringue, egg pasta, bakery goods
- Globulin, egg lecithin (E322), livetin, ovalbumin, ovoglobulin, ovomucin, ovovitellin, vitellin

8. Milk

- Cow's milk allergy is the most common food allergy in young children, although most grow out of it by the age of about 3.
- People allergic to cow's milk are also likely to be allergic to the milk of other animals such as sheep, goats and buffalo.
- Milk (fresh, UHT, evaporated, condensed, dried)

Check the labels for these milk derivatives:

- Casein, caseinates, hydrolysed casein, sodium caseinate
- Whey, hydrolysed whey, whey powder, whey syrup sweetener, lactose
- Milk solids
- Butter, butter oil, buttermilk, ghee
- Cheese, cream, curd
- Yoghurt, fromage frais
- Lactic acid (E270), lactoglobulin, lactose

9. Soya Beans

- Soya flour, soya tofu, soya protein isolates, soya protein concentrates, Textured soya protein, hydrolysed vegetable protein, if made from soya, Soya infant formula, Soy sauce, Lecithin (E322) if made from soya.

10. Celery and Celeriac

- Allergic reactions to celery and celeriac are uncommon in the UK, but are common in mainland Europe, and travellers from these countries are more likely to be affected.
- Derivatives include celery powder, celery seeds and celeriac powder.

11. Mustard

- Allergic reactions to mustard are uncommon in the UK, but are common in France, and travellers from this country are more likely to be affected.
- Derivatives include mustard paste, mustard seeds, mustard leaves, mustard flour and mustard powder.

12. Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphites

- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites are used as a preservative in many foods, including dried fruits and vegetables, soft drinks, fruit juices, fermented drinks (wine, beer and cider) sausages and burgers.
- These preservatives have to be declared on labels at levels above 10mg per kg or per litre.
- Sulphite additives in wine have been associated with triggering asthmatic responses in sensitive individuals
- Derivatives include E 220 Sulphur dioxide, E 221 Sodium sulphite, E 222 Sodium hydrogen sulphite, E 223 Sodium metabisulphite, E 224 Potassium metabisulphite, E 226 Calcium sulphite E 227 Calcium hydrogen sulphite, E 228 Potassium hydrogen sulphite

Food Intolerance - Coeliac Disease

Coeliac Disease is the development of a permanent intolerance to gluten, the proteins found in wheat, and similar proteins found in rye, barley and oats. The gluten damages the lining of the intestine which greatly reduces the ability of the gut to absorb adequate nutrients from food.

A gluten free diet always excludes wheat, rye and barley and oats. Oats can be contaminated by the milling process or in the field and are therefore best avoided.

The diet must be followed strictly for life.

Coeliac symptoms can manifest themselves at any age; it is no longer regarded as a childhood disease. There has been a rapid growth in the incidence of the disease in the U.K. 1 in 1000 of the U.K. population is diagnosed but it is estimated that this is the tip of the iceberg and that the true prevalence of the disease is likely to be as high as 1 in 200.

Preparation of a Gluten Free Diet

- Special care must be taken to ensure that all ingredients used in the diet are gluten free - check labels carefully for the cereals and any derivatives such as wheat starch, if in doubt don't use.
- Care must be taken during preparation and weighing to ensure that the gluten free ingredients do not get contaminated with other ingredients containing gluten.
- All food and ingredients should be labelled to avoid confusion in the catering department.
- Care should be taken with the cleaning of equipment and the use of toasters to avoid contamination from crumbs of normal bread
- If conditions and staffing make the provision of safe gluten free food difficult then consideration should be given to purchasing ready-made gluten free meals from a reliable supplier.

For up-to-date information about Coeliac Disease and gluten free products such as bread, cakes, biscuits and pasta contact Coeliac UK www.coeliac.org.uk

Ways of Preventing Allergen Consumption

The following practices will reduce the risk of sensitive people consuming allergenic foods, either directly, or as a result of cross contamination:

Whole School

- All staff must be aware of which students suffer from food allergies. The school will identify and highlight to staff all students with such allergies. Appropriate systems will be put in place to identify students with allergies, e.g. photographs on staff notice boards, information on SIMS, lunch cards with a colour code identifier, etc.
- All staff should be aware of the signs of an allergic reaction and know the immediate action that must be taken.
- The Stockport School Food Allergy Policy prohibits snacks, cakes and confectionary being brought into school that contain common allergens such as nuts, e.g. as snacks or in student's packed lunches. Students and their parents will be made aware of this, and frequently reminded of the importance in adhering to the policy for the safety of all staff and students in the school.
- Stockport School has a policy not to use common allergens such as nuts as ingredients in foods made and served by the school.
- Stockport School has a policy not to sell confectionary and other items containing common allergens such as nuts.

In the Kitchen / Food Technology Department:

- All staff, including temporary staff, involved in handling ingredients, preparing and serving food, and cleaning utensils, equipment and surfaces, must be trained so that they are aware of the very serious risks associated with food allergies, and the actions that must be taken to prevent allergen cross contamination. This training should be recorded.
- Read the ingredients list. Most manufactured food must, by law list any ingredients that are allergens or their derivatives, regardless of how small an amount is included. Food labels may also list allergens that might inadvertently be included in the product, e.g. "may contain nuts and seeds" because it is used in other foods produced in the same factory, or on the same production line.
- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly, particularly after handling food containing known allergens.

- Store food containing allergens in dedicated and easily identifiable containers, e.g. colour coded. (NB When decanting foods ensure the following information is retained - name of the product, list of ingredients and allergens, 'use by' date)
- Be careful when weighing ingredients especially wheat flour which can linger in the atmosphere.
- Use dedicated equipment and utensils for preparing food containing allergens, e.g. sieves, whisks, knives, boards, measuring jugs, weighing pans, oven trays, grill racks, serving dishes and spoons. If this is not possible ensure they are thoroughly washed after contact with the allergen
- Where possible prepare foods containing allergens in separate areas, or after foods not containing allergens.
- Change the oil after frying foods containing allergens as they may leave traces in the oil, which can then be transferred to other foods.
- Never change recipes, e.g. by adding nuts or sesame seeds to dishes such as stuffing, meringue, vegetables and composite salads without informing the cook and food service assistants.
- The Catering Manager will ensure that all food service staff are briefed each day to ensure that everyone knows which dishes contain food allergens, and which ones they are.

In the Dining Room:

- The school will display food containing allergens in dedicated and easily identifiable containers, e.g. colour coded, with good separation between foods containing allergens and those without
- The school will use dedicated equipment and utensils for serving food containing allergens.
- If necessary, the catering staff will help younger students to serve themselves – and make sure they don't swap the utensils around
- The school will always clearly label foods if they contain a food allergen.
- Individual students with allergies will appear on their Wisepay page when they come to pay for any food. Catering staff will be able to assess whether there is any ingredient in their purchase to cause concern and will react appropriately by informing the student of the content of the food and if necessary ensuring they select an alternative option.

Enquiries and Ill-Effects

Catering staff must receive training on food allergies so that they understand the significance of staff and student's questions regarding food ingredients.

Enquiries about ingredients must be taken seriously and procedures must be established that can be followed if staff or students have a food allergy. If a member of the catering staff is uncertain whether or not a food item contains a specified food allergen, the question must be referred to the Catering Manager so that the 'customer' can be sure that the food they are eating is safe for them.

If anyone experiences any ill effects after eating food prepared or served in the school, the incident should be reported immediately to the Catering Manager so that relevant enquiries can be made and action taken if necessary

Further Information and Guidance

The following websites contain lots of very useful information:

<http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>

<http://www.food.gov.uk/policy-advice/allergyintol/>
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/Pages/Intro1.aspx>

This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

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