

Foodsafety BYTES

Number: 3 Allergens III

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It is really important that food businesses manage allergens effectively to ensure food is safe for customers with food allergies. This involves having good food preparation and hygiene practices in place to avoid cross-contamination and keeping records of all allergen ingredients.

Recording Allergens

Food businesses must know what is in the food they provide. Allergen ingredients should be recorded on product specification sheets, included on ingredient labels, included in recipes and they must be kept up to date.

Cross-contamination

This is where traces of allergens get into products accidentally. This can happen during different points of the production process from manufacturing and handling, through to transport and storage.

Food businesses need to take steps to avoid cross-contamination in food with careful management, staff awareness, separate production facilities, and storing ingredients separately.

Allergen specific testing

Testing for the presence of specific food allergens helps to safeguard manufacturers against undeclared allergens entering the final product. Not only this but it minimises the risk of product recalls.

Environmental swabs can also be taken as part of an effective quality control procedure after an area has been sanitised helping to verify the efficacy of a cleaning procedure and can help identify sources of cross contamination.

Enforcement and penalties

Not only could you make a customer seriously ill, you could also face financial risk and reputational damage to your food business if you fail to comply with allergen information requirements.