

# Allergens Fact Sheet

Providers of food can greatly reduce the risks associated with food allergies. **Small changes** such as being aware of the common allergens in food and drink make a **big difference**.



**90**

PERCENT

of food allergies worldwide are caused by the 'big 8' allergens - wheat, peanuts, soybeans, milk, eggs, tree nuts, crustacea and fish.<sup>1</sup>

# Food allergies

A food allergy is an overreaction by the body's immune system to a normally harmless component of a food or drink (normally a type of protein).

It is important to be familiar with foods and ingredients that may cause an allergic reaction and adopt good food handling practices to reduce the risk of accidental exposure and adverse effects.

12

percent of  
Australians have  
food allergies.

## Common food allergens

- Crustacea and shellfish
- Egg
- Fish
- Milk
- Peanut
- Tree nuts (e.g. cashews, almonds)
- Soy
- Sesame
- Gluten

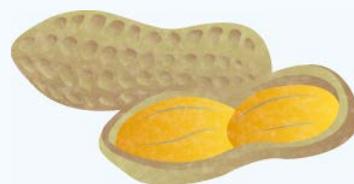
However, any food containing a protein can trigger anaphylaxis in allergic individuals.

## Signs and symptoms

The symptoms of an allergic reaction can range from mild to life threatening. Reactions often occur within 20 minutes to two hours of the person eating the food and can progress rapidly.

### Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Skin redness, hives or welts
- Tingling mouth
- Swelling of the face, lips and eyes
- Abdominal pain, vomiting



### Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)

- Difficult/noisy breathing
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Swelling or tightness of the throat
- Swelling of the tongue
- Difficulty talking and/or hoarse throat
- Persistent dizziness or collapse



**! Anaphylaxis is a medical emergency and an ambulance must be called immediately.**

## Allergies and catering

Management of food allergy is a shared responsibility and food providers can greatly reduce the risks associated with food allergies by:

- Understanding the seriousness of food allergy and the needs of the individual with a food allergy.
- Reading the ingredient labels of packaged foods and identify food allergens#.
- Avoiding cross contamination of food during the storage, preparation, cooking and serving of food through shared utensils or equipment, sharing food (buffet style/finger foods), re-using cooking oils and/or unclean work surfaces.
- Providing the allergen status of foods on request.
- Noting and communicating the allergy risk of ingredients added to a dish or recipe that does not usually contain it.

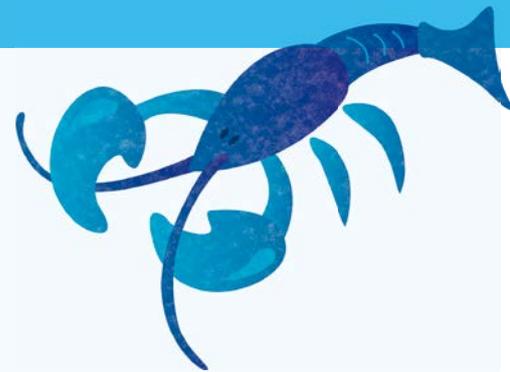
# According to Food Standards Australia and New Zealand's (FSANZ) the allergens that need to be specified are:

- **Crustacea** and their products, e.g. prawns, crabs, lobster, Balmain bugs, yabbies
- **Eggs and egg products**, e.g. whole egg, egg yolk, egg white, albumin, dried egg, meringue, custard powder
- **Fish and fish products**, e.g. roe, caviar, anchovies, Worcestershire sauce
- **Milk and milk products**, e.g. dried milk, skim milk, evaporated milk, condensed milk, whey, lactose, yoghurt
- **Peanuts, soybeans and their products**, e.g. peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, soybeans
- **Tree nuts, sesame seeds and their products**, e.g. almonds, brazil nuts, cashew nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans
- **Gluten containing cereal or their products**, e.g. wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, triticale, wheat starch, wheat-based corn flour.

Whilst we cannot ever say a food is totally safe, we can reduce the risk markedly.

Foods that contain allergens can still be provided at events and functions. The allergen identification template can be used to assist catering staff to identify food allergens. This should be completed and available upon request.

Anaphylaxis Australia has developed a Food Service Kit to assist with training and allergen management in the food service sector. Visit [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)



Peanut



Crustacea and shellfish



Tree nuts (e.g. cashews)



Egg



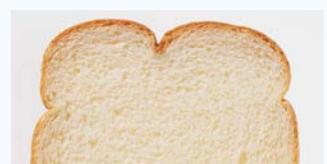
Milk



Fish



Sesame and soy



Gluten

# Allergen identification template



Organisation:

Event/Meeting:

Date:

This identification template can be used to assist catering staff to identify food allergens. This information should be completed in full and be available on request.

## Allergen

## Menu item where allergen is present

Crustacea and their products  
*e.g. prawns, crabs, lobster, Balmain bugs, yabbies*



Eggs and egg products  
*e.g. whole egg, egg yolk, egg white, albumin, dried egg, meringue, custard powder*



Fish and fish products  
*e.g. roe, caviar, anchovies, Worcestershire sauce*



Milk and milk products  
*e.g. dried milk, skim milk, evaporated milk, condensed milk, whey, lactose, yoghurt*



Peanuts, soybeans and their products  
*e.g. peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, soybeans*



Tree nuts, sesame seeds and their products  
*e.g. almonds, brazil nuts, cashew nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans*



Gluten containing cereal or their products  
*e.g. wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, triticale, wheat starch, wheat-based corn flour*

