The Management of Food Allergies and Intolerances (CD1)

Food allergies and intolerances are relatively uncommon in the general population however they do present special problems for those who deal with them. Individuals who have food intolerances have to be very careful about what they eat. Nut allergy specifically peanuts (ground nuts) as opposed to tree nuts cause most concern as the consequence of the ingestion of nuts can be very serious. For other allergies whilst there is still concern the inadvertent ingestion is still none the less serious and upsetting for the individual.

On 14th December 2014, Allergen Legislation was introduced across the UK and is actively implemented and adhered to in all Accent Catering sites. The new legislation covers 14 main allergens which need to be clearly identified and communicated to all consumers.

The following allergies are those included in the Allergen Legislation 2014.

Allergy and Food Intolerances

Allergen	Definition
Cereals including Gluten	Wheat, rye, oats and barley
Celery	Stalks, leaves, seeds and the root celeriac
Crustaceans	Crabs, lobster, prawns and scampi
Fish	Fresh fish, sauces, dressings, stock cubes and Worcestershire sauce
Lupin	Flowers and seeds found in bread, pizza, pasta
Molluscs	Mussels, land snails, and whelks, oyster sauce
Mustard	Liquid Mustard, Mustard Powder and Mustard Seeds
Peanuts	Or Groundnut, either whole or in biscuits, cakes sauces
Soya	Bean curd, edamame beans, soya flour, soya protein, vegetarian dishes
Sesame Seeds	Bread, bread products, bread coatings , houmous, tahini, sesame oils
Sulphur Dioxide	Sulphites, dried fruit, raisins etc , wine and beers, meat products and soft drinks
Milk	All milk proteins and milk sugars and products contain milk e.g. cheese yogurts and baked goods
Egg	Includes dried egg, egg albumen and egg lecithin
Nut	Nuts and nut derivatives such as oils

Allergen training is completed with all members of the Catering team and full allergen information will be available in a number of different formats including allergen icons on menus, recipe database and manual recipe files held on site. Please ask for more details from your Accent Catering Team.

A detailed auditable trail of ingredients and recipes is implemented into each operation to ensure adherence to the Legislation.

Catering for individuals with allergies poses special problems, diets tend to be more costly to prepare and the ingredients are often more expensive, in addition they also tend to be less interesting to children. Problems with providing such diets can arise at different levels. These may include but are not limited to

Ingredients

- Substitute gluten free flours have very different characteristics and do not always behave as direct replacement for their gluten containing counterpart, they can also be less palatable
- Egg lecithin and albumen are common additions to foodstuffs

Contamination

- Flour from wheat can readily contaminate other areas
- Saucepans that are not cleaned properly for example may have traces of wheat pasta present and used for boiling gluten free pasta
- Foods that obviously do not contain nuts may be manufactured in an area where nuts have been present.

Preparation

- Cross contamination can occur in preparation of foods e.g. wheat flour and gluten free foods
- The wrong milk may be used in food preparation

Misidentification

- 'Milks' can easily be confused as they may all look so similar.

Food Service

- A clear method of Allergen control will be agreed at each site, with additional steps being agreed when dealing with younger children or vulnerable groups of adults
- Older children are asked to carefully check labels of individually packaged products to satisfy themselves of the contents.

Consumption

- A child may incorrectly identify the food available
- A child may deliberately select the wrong food choice

In October 2021, **Natasha's Law** (the UK Food Information Amendment 2019) came into force to protect individuals with food allergies. This change in the regulations is specifically targeted at **Prepacked for Direct Sale (PPDS)** food—items are prepared and / or packaged on the same premises from which they are sold before a customer orders or selects them (e.g., grab-and-go sandwiches or boxed salads, cakes, biscuits etc).

Core Requirements

Each Accent unit producing PPDS must include the following on their product labels:

- **Name of the food:** A clear, non-misleading description.
- **Full ingredients list:** Every ingredient listed in descending order of weight at the time of production.
- **Emphasised allergens:** Any of the 14 major allergens must be clearly highlighted in bold within the ingredients list.
- **Our Grab and Go manual** lists ingredients and allergens and are the essential guide for units when preparing PPDS ranges.
- Our process is automated via **the Saffron system** (a documented system to track ingredient changes from suppliers) **identifies PPDS Products**
- **Delivery checks** ensure we can verify correct ingredient records and ensure substitutions can introduce hidden allergens.

As a fresh food company, Accent Catering are unable to guarantee that items produced in our kitchens and / or offered for consumption / sale are free from nuts or nut products. This applies to meals, constituents of a meal, sandwiches and snacks served. The following procedures will be implemented across our business:-

- Ensuring that all foods are stored with labels clearly identifying Allergens present in that product
- Catering staff preparing food will ensure thorough cleanliness at all stages of preparation to prevent cross contamination of foodstuffs and if necessary use special utensils.
- Inadvertent cross contamination resulting in the food being prepared as contaminated will be disposed of.
- Catering staff will clearly identify the Allergens so that serving staff and children will be aware which are the products containing Allergens.
- Catering staff will notify the teaching staff if they are aware of children not taking the right food choices either accidentally or deliberately.

Because such diets are highly complex and also more costly Accent requires that for each diet a request is accompanied by letter from a medical practitioner or a dietician. It is helpful for the parent or carer to provide written information for diets that are more complex.

If you would like any further information on food allergens or intolerances, please talk to the Catering Manager, who will be pleased to help.

Ian Crabtree
Managing Director
Accent Catering Services Ltd
September 2025