

# ALLERGY AWARE CHECKLIST

## **LISTEN to your customers and BE TRUTHFUL**

- Take customer requests about allergens seriously. Listen carefully.
- Give customers accurate information about the content of meals when they ask.
- Have a specific protocol to follow if a customer says they have a food allergy.
- Include a note on all menus asking customers to **ALWAYS** disclose their food allergy when ordering from the menu.

## **KNOW what's in your food**

- Only accept labelled foods or foods supplied with ingredient information (Product Information Form).
- Check all ingredients even in sauces, spices, garnish, oils, dressings etc for allergens. Food labels and Product Information Forms (for unlabelled foods) should be checked every time as manufacturers may change their ingredients or processes.
- Avoid ingredient substitution when preparing food.
- If you accept a substituted product from your supplier, check the food label/Product Information Form.
- Be familiar with all ingredients as some may be made from one or more food allergens which may not be obvious from their name.
- Set up an allergen matrix for each menu item which will help you and your staff easily identify the common allergens when customers ask for allergen information. An example of an allergen matrix and a template can be downloaded from: [www.foodallergytraining.org.au](http://www.foodallergytraining.org.au)

## **PREPARE food safely**

- Avoid cross contamination of food allergens.
- Always double check the ingredients with the chef and the customer (if unsure).
- Handle food safely with clean hands washed with warm, soapy water. Hands should be washed regularly and you should re-wash your hands before preparing food that must be free of a specific allergen.
- Clean and sanitise work surfaces, utensils and other food-contact items between foods. Even trace amounts can be harmful.
- Store food safely in labelled containers.
- Have a dedicated area for preparing allergen free meals (be aware that food that is safe for one person with a food allergy may be unsafe for another person with a different food allergy).
- It may be helpful to prepare meals for people with food allergy first.
- Have a clear way of identifying the meal for the person with food allergy (e.g. coloured toothpick for plated meals or stickers for wrapped foods).
- Always take the meal to the customer with a food allergy separately, not whilst carrying other meals.
- Check the correct allergen free meal is given to the person with the food allergy declared.

## **EDUCATE your staff – UNDERSTAND the consequences**

- If you are required to have a Food Safety Supervisor, ensure their training is up to date.
- Train and test all staff regularly in food safety, hygiene and allergen awareness - free online training is available from [www.foodallergytraining.org.au](http://www.foodallergytraining.org.au)
- Display *The Usual Suspects* poster in your kitchen (available from: [http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retail/the\\_usual\\_suspects\\_poster.pdf](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retail/the_usual_suspects_poster.pdf)).