

## Risk management strategies for food allergen management

A number of risk management strategies can be employed to manage food allergens as detailed below. Consideration of these risk management strategies may assist authorised officers to help educate businesses about food allergen management.

### Customer service strategies

- Does the food service provide customers with accurate information about the ingredients of meals when they ask? What evidence can they provide (e.g., food allergen menu matrix or standardised recipe template)?
- Does the food service have a specific protocol to follow if a customer says they have a food allergy? Can they provide you with a copy?
- Does the food service include a note on the menu, booking website or service counter asking customers to inform service staff of their food allergy when ordering food?
- Does the business have an incident logbook and is this used for food allergen related complaints?

### Product information strategies

- Does the food service only accept labelled foods or foods supplied with ingredient information (Product Information Form)?
- Does the food service have a process in place to check all ingredients (including sauces, spices, garnish, oils, dressings etc.) for food allergens each time they are ordered and received?
- Are products/menu items checked regularly to ensure ingredients lists have not changed?
- Does the food service educate staff to not substitute ingredients when preparing food for a customer with food allergy? If a substitute ingredient must be used, is there a protocol in place to ensure the product is checked for food allergen content?
- Does the food service have a food allergen menu matrix for each menu item? How regularly is the food allergen menu matrix reviewed and/or updated? An example of a food allergen menu matrix and a template can be downloaded from: <https://www.foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/allergen-menu-matrix>

### Food preparation strategies

- Does the food service have processes in place to avoid cross contamination of food allergens? Can they provide you with examples of these processes?
- Does the food service have a protocol in place that requires staff to handle food safely with clean hands washed with liquid soap and warm running water? Hands should be washed regularly, and they should be re-washed before preparing food that must be free of a specific allergen.
- Does the food service clean and sanitise work surfaces, utensils and other food-contact items between foods?
- Are the staff in the food service aware that even trace amounts of a food the customer is allergic to can be harmful?
- Does the food service store food safely in sealed, labelled containers marked with the product name, ingredients, allergen statements, use by or best before dates?
- Does the food service have a separate or dedicated area for preparing allergen free meals?
- Are the staff in the food service aware that food that is safe for one customer with a food allergy may be unsafe for another customer with a different food allergy?
- Does the food service prepare meals for customers with food allergy first?
- Does the food service have a clear way of identifying the meal for the customer with food allergy (e.g., coloured toothpick for plated meals or stickers for wrapped foods)?

- Does the food service always take the meal to the customer with a food allergy separately (not whilst carrying other meals to avoid getting the meals mixed up)?
- Does the food service check the correct allergen free meal is given to the customer with the food allergy declared on serving the meal?

### Staff education strategies

- Does the food service have a Food Safety Supervisor (if required in the jurisdiction) or nominated person responsible for overseeing food safety management? What training has this person undertaken and when? Did the training include comprehensive food allergen management training?
- Does the food service train and test all staff regularly in food safety, hygiene and allergen awareness? Free All about Allergens online training is available from [www.foodallergytraining.org.au](http://www.foodallergytraining.org.au)
- Does the food service have a food allergen management policy and are staff made aware of the policy? Sample policies are available from [www.foodallergytraining.org.au/resources](http://www.foodallergytraining.org.au/resources)
- Does the food service display *The Usual Suspects* or *Allergy Aware Checklist* poster in their kitchen available from <https://www.foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/gfs>

