**National Allergy Council**

**Food allergy management audit tool - Healthcare**

**Aim:** This tool has been developed to assist dietitians and catering managers undertake a comprehensive audit to assess the food safety protocols and procedures regarding food allergies at [insert Healthcare facility name]. The tool can identify potential gaps or errors that may occur and provides recommendations to update food allergy protocols and procedures.

**Before using this audit tool template, please note the following:**

* This template has been designed based on evidence based best practice and is consistent with and supported by the [Queensland Health/National Allergy Council Food Allergen Management in Foodservice Best Practice Guideline](https://foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/images/docs/Food_Allergen_Best_Practice_Guidelines.pdf).
* This template aims to allow for different healthcare facility systems (paper and electronic) where possible.
* This template can be customised to individual healthcare facility systems and protocols to suit your healthcare facility’s approach to policies and procedures.
* This template is editable, allowing you to make changes as required. Throughout the document, you will find [red text] where information can be inserted, edited and/or removed.
* This template focuses on food allergy because food allergies are potentially life-threatening. The tool could be applied to food intolerances as well.
* Where a dietitian is not employed by the healthcare facility, appropriate processes must still be in place to ensure an appropriate food service is provided to patients with food allergies.

The Queensland Health/National Allergy Council Best Practice Guideline (2024) recommends internal food safety audits to be conducted regularly as per the [insert Healthcare facility Food Safety Program] auditing schedule or after a food allergy incident, in addition to external food safety audits to be completed at least **annually**. It is important to conduct regular audits to ensure continual quality improvement of the food service provided.

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| **Procedure and recommended verification** | **Current practice on site /observations** | **Achieved?** | **Recommended action** |
| **1. Admission** | | | |
| There is a documentation system for recording the patient’s food allergy/allergies on the appropriate forms and systems when they are admitted. | * [Insert relevant Healthcare facility form] * [Insert Healthcare facility clinical alert form] * [Insert Healthcare facility inpatient medication chart] * [Insert Healthcare facility meal ordering system name] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Food allergy patients have a food allergy awareness note/sign placed above their bed that clearly states the allergy/allergies. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Food allergy patients are wearing a patient identification band that highlights that the patient has an allergy. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **2. Meal ordering** | | | |
| Every patient is asked at the time of allocating their diet type whether they have a food allergy and what food they are allergic to. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Food allergy is noted in the meal ordering system on the date of admission. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| There is a procedure for patients with unconfirmed allergies and this is implemented (e.g. patients with unconfirmed food allergies **do not** receive any meals or snacks or a strict diet allergy order is placed until the allergy is confirmed). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Patients with a food intolerance are prescribed relevant therapeutic diet types OR appropriate menu choices are selected from standard ward diet type [or insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure]. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Referral made to dietitian |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Cook or chef is notified of patient allergy meal request |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **3. Patient meal selection** | | | |
| There is a procedure for patients with food allergy to select meals from the menu (e.g. separate paper menu or filtered by an electronic menu system). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| There is a procedure for the provision of meals to patients with food allergy who do not self-select from the menu (e.g. do they receive an appropriate default meal?). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| There is a procedure for the provision of meals to patients with a food allergen that is not one of the ten common food allergens. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **4. Food ordering and suppliers** | | | |
| **Food contracts management**  All food items are purchased from an approved and trusted supplier under contract arrangements. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All food items and ingredients received have an up-to-date Product Information Form (PIF) that includes an allergen statement and is maintained in a central file for future reference. This may include in written or electronic form and may include a common database across more than one site.  There is a process to verify that the PIF received and on file are the most up to date. |  | Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Food items are not substituted without notification and approval as per the Food Contract. Substitutions are documented and communicated. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| A system is in place to check changes to product formulation or processing (e.g. cross contamination risk). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| The [Insert relevant staff member (e.g. food service manager, food service dietitian, food safety officer)] receives and actions product recall information from FSANZ in relation to undeclared allergens. |  | Yes  No  N/A | [Subscribe](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/subscribe) to receive FSANZ product recall notifications. |
| **Receiving and product checking** |  |  |  |
| All items received are checked on receival and receival log entries note that it is the correct product, brand, temperature, best before date, batch number are completed.  *If* an alternative brand/product is received, then labels are checked or an up to date PIF is used to assess potential substitution risk arising from ingredients or allergy declarations and the food allergen menu matrix is updated.  Filed PIFs are checked routinely for accuracy and currency of ingredients and allergy declarations against current products and any variations are noted, communicated and risks addressed. |  | Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **Storage** |  |  |  |
| No non-conformances regarding the storage of food that is free of the common food allergens are noted.  If noted, appropriate corrective action was taken, recorded, and signed off by a staff member. Records are available for the auditor to review. |  | Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **Dry storage**  Food that is free of the common food allergens (e.g. wheat free flour) is stored away from other products that may contaminate it.  Integrity of product packaging is monitored in routine store audits/reviews and products removed (and where necessary disposed of) where they pose a cross-contamination risk.  Products with gluten and wheat are stored **separately.**  All decanted products are in sealed containers and have a label indicating the product name, ingredients, allergen statements, best before dates, date decanted. |  | Yes  No  N/A    Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **Cold storage**  Food that is free of the common food allergens is stored away from other products that may contaminate it.  Integrity of product packaging is monitored in routine store audits/reviews and products removed (and where necessary disposed of) where they pose a cross-contamination risk.  All decanted products are in sealed containers and have a label indicating the product name, ingredients, allergen statements, best before dates, date decanted. |  | Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **Frozen storage**  Food that is free of the common food allergens is stored away from other products that may contaminate it.  Integrity of product packaging is monitored in routine store audits/reviews and products removed (and where necessary disposed of) where they pose a cross-contamination risk.  All decanted products are in sealed containers and have a label indicating the product name, ingredients, allergen statements, best before dates, date decanted.  Pre-prepared allergy meals are covered or sealed, labelled and stored appropriately to prevent cross contamination until delivery. |  | Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **5. Meal preparation for food allergy meals** | | | |
| Cleaning schedule for all meal and snack preparation areas are completed and signed.  Cleaning processes take into account removal of allergens |  | Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Personal protective equipment is correctly applied to prevent cross contamination of allergens. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| There is a process for verification of the cleaning process to ensure no residual of food product on meal preparation areas **or** utensils with potential for cross contamination. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Relevant separate equipment is provided where cleaning between use is not reasonable or possible (e.g. a separate toaster for wheat free [gluten free] bread). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Food item ingredient labels are checked for food allergens prior to preparing all meals. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Meals for patients with food allergy are prepared in a separate area that is designated for this purpose.  If a separate area is not available for preparing meals for patients with food allergy, those recipes/meals are prepared first in an area that has been fully cleaned including cleaning the equipment to minimise risk of cross contamination. The cleaning is documented and signed by staff. |  | Yes  No  N/A  Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Standard recipes are available for all on-site prepared meal items. Standard recipe includes allergen information and diet suitability signed off by an Accredited Practising Dietitian. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Cook has to sign off on all recipes as preparation is complete noting any variations to the standard recipe of ingredients. This is documented in a communication log with an entry number. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility form/process] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Food that is free of the common allergens is stored separate to other food or pre-plated and covered so there is less risk of contamination from other food products. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All allergen food that is required to be reheated is done so separately (or is pre-plated and covered and reheated) to reduce contamination by allergens. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Allergen meals from the main line are plated first prior to any other meal being plated in the kitchen at that meal service. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All meal trays are checked for plating accuracy prior to leaving the kitchen. | [Insert relevant staff member (e.g. trained food service supervisor) and process] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| No cross contamination incidents noted or if noted, appropriate corrective action taken, recorded and signed. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| No inaccuracy incident noted, or if noted, appropriate corrective action taken, recorded and signed. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Staff will prepare food in ward pantries in such a way that prevents cross contamination between foods. | [Insert ward pantry process] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **6. Meal delivery** | | | |
| **Main meals and mid-meals**  There is a system to easily identify a meal at the ward level for patients with a food allergy/specific food intolerance diets (e.g. coloured trays, tray ticket messages, coloured stickers). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Staff are checking correct meal to correct patient before leaving the meal with the patient, and there are no meals delivered to patients who have allergies, who are not in their room. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Meals that are prepared for patients with food allergy are covered to minimise the risk of cross contamination. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| There is a documented procedure for meal delivery to patients with food allergy. | * Include relevant staff members who deliver main and mid-meals * Include the correct Healthcare facility procedure when providing an allergy patient with a meal and mid-meals * Include the correct Healthcare facility procedure when an allergy patient is not in their bed (e.g. no meals are left at the bedside) | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| A final check of meal tray accuracy is conducted at the ward level to ensure that what is on the tray ticket matches the items on the tray. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All mid-meal food packaging is intact and has been stored separately to foods containing allergens and labelling requirements are followed including labelling with ingredients, allergen statements, best before dates. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All mid-meal items are labelled correctly with diet type, patient name, ward and bed number. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Additions and/or substitutions are **not added to any meal** **or mid-meal items** after the meal tray has left the kitchen. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Cleaning schedule for trolleys and trays are completed and signed. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| No inaccuracy incident noted in the Healthcare facility clinical incident reporting system, or if noted, appropriate corrective action taken, recorded, and signed. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| No cross contamination incidents noted or if noted, appropriate corrective action taken, recorded, and signed. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **7. After hours meals** | | | |
| There is a system for providing food to patients with food allergy after hours that includes:   * Documenting the patient’s identified food allergy. * What food is available after hours. * Allergen and ingredient content of the food. * Process for checking with the patient or carer that the food is suitable to give to the patient. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| There is a system in place for communicating food allergy status of patients admitted after hours to the kitchen for meals for the following day. | [Insert relevant after-hours information (e.g. phone calls are noted in communication log to kitchen requesting allergy meals)] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **8. Vending machines** | | | |
| There is a system in place for identifying the allergen content of food in vending machines on site. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **9. Vendors** | | | |
| Vending machine vendors and on-site food services vendors have obligations with regard to training of staff and allergen declarations included in their contractual arrangements. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **10. Volunteer work (raffles)** | | | |
| Volunteers have training and procedures to follow with regard to offering food to patients. | [Include correct Healthcare facility procedure (e.g. training requirements and procedure for identifying and managing patients with food allergies if handling food)] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **11. Meal assistance** | | | |
| All staff members who assist patients with meals comply with personal hygiene requirements and personal protective equipment. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Staff members who order test meals correctly identify the patient’s food allergy. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure and food management system (e.g. phone call to the Food Services Supervisor)] | Yes  No  N/A |  |

**Support programs for food allergen management**

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| **1. Standard recipes** |  |  |  |
| There are standard recipes documented for all on-site prepared meal items. This includes allergen information, ingredients of concern, and diet suitability. |  | Yes  No  N/A | A standardised recipe template is [available](https://foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/standardised-recipe-template) |
| The standard recipes are being followed (use the audits for evidence). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Menu and recipe substitutions are checked with a dietitian and/or trained food service manager before supplying items to a patient with a food allergy. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A | A food allergen ingredient substitution tool is [available](https://foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/ingredient-substitution) |
| The chef/cook has signed off on all recipes as prepared noting any variations to ingredients and communication log. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Recipe sign off sheet and communication log matches. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **2. Education and training** | | | |
| All relevant staff members have completed orientation training regarding food allergen management in food service.  Staff receive training regarding their specific role in food allergy management (e.g. store person checks correct brand and files PIF, chef uses correct brand and follows standard recipe). |  | Yes  No  N/A | Food service managers, food service staff, ward managers, ward staff, dietitians: [National Allergy Council: All about Allergens for Hospitals](https://foodallergytraining.org.au/course/index.php?categoryid=3) |
| All relevant staff members have completed refresher training regarding food allergen management in food service. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Training records are kept, documenting which staff have completed training, what training they have completed and when they last completed the training. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **3. Communication and awareness** |  |  |  |
| There is a food allergen menu matrix or equivalent system that includes all food and beverage items in the kitchen and ward pantries. This system easily identifies allergens and ingredients in recipes and menu items. |  | Yes  No  N/A | National Allergy Council food allergen menu matrix template is [available](https://foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/allergen-menu-matrix). |
| The food allergen menu matrix or equivalent is readily available to patients and staff, particularly for the provision of meals out of hours. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| If an automated menu system is in use, there is a process for ensuring that the ingredient and allergen information in the system is up-to-date and accurate. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| There is a Food Allergy management flow chart displayed in the food service area. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| The common allergens listed by Food Standards Australia & New Zealand, Food Standards Code are listed on poster in the kitchen. |  | Yes  No  N/A | The [Usual Suspects](https://foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/gfs) poster is available. |
| Food ingredients including nutrition content and declarable allergens are available for all food items on the menu including mid-meal items. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| A food allergen matrix listing all pantry foods and their ingredients, and which common allergens they contain is displayed clearly in the ward pantry. |  | Yes  No  N/A | National Allergy Council food allergen menu matrix template is [available](https://foodallergytraining.org.au/resources/allergen-menu-matrix) |
| Relevant staff members are aware of the patient’s food allergens on their ward (e.g. nursing staff and patient support services). |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Relevant staff members (e.g. food service staff, nursing staff and dietetic staff) are aware of and can verbalise the Food Allergy Management process. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **4. Food brought from home** | | | |
| There is a Healthcare facility food from home policy/procedure in place which is being followed. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All external food is stored appropriately and labelled as per the Food Safety Program. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **5. Other food preparation situations** |  |  |  |
| Any activity (e.g. cooking activities with patients, areas where patients prepare food for themselves) has a food allergy management procedure in place. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **6. Cleaning and sanitising** | | | |
| There is a cleaning procedure displayed for pre-cleaning prior to the preparation of meals for patients with food allergy in the food service area. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All surfaces and utensils are cleaned and sanitised prior to preparing meals for patients with food allergy. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Cleaning schedules are completed and signed as per the Food Safety Program. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| Audit shows all personal protective equipment is available and clearly identified when preparing meals for patients with food allergy. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **7. Verification (auditing)** | | | |
| Internal food safety audits of the Food allergen management processes are completed regularly, and any non-conformances show corrective actions taken. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility process] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| External food safety audits are completed annually and non-conformances show corrective actions taken. |  | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **8. Incident management** | | | |
| Incidents are documented and all corrective actions are recorded in the patient safety system. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility incident management procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| **9. Incident reporting** | | | |
| Audit reports are recorded in the relevant Healthcare facility procedure]. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |
| All incidents, including near misses, related to food allergy are clearly recorded on the clinical incident recording system and corrective actions have been applied. | [Insert relevant Healthcare facility incident management procedure] | Yes  No  N/A |  |