

Changes to food allergen information rules

Food allergens can be life threatening and the only way people can manage a food allergy is to avoid the foods that make them ill. An oversight on your part – such as serving someone a food they are allergic to – can damage the reputation of your business as well as cause serious harm to your customer. Food allergens cannot be removed by cooking. That is why it's essential to practise good kitchen hygiene, as well as careful separation, storage and labelling of ingredients when preparing food.

From 13 December 2014, all food businesses will need to provide information about the allergenic ingredients used in food sold or provided by them. The EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (No.1169/2011) outlines the new requirements for businesses which are providing food sold prepacked and non-prepacked (loose) such as food sold in a restaurant or takeaway. There are 14 major allergens which need to be declared:

- **Cereals containing gluten** namely wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan wheat), barley, rye and oats
- **Crustaceans** like prawns, crabs, lobster and crayfish etc.
- **Eggs**
- **Fish**
- **Peanuts**
- **Soybeans**
- **Milk**
- **Nuts** namely almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew, Macadamia or Queensland nut.
- **Celery**
- **Mustard**
- **Sesame**
- **Sulphur dioxide or sulphites** (where added and is >10mg/kg in the finished product. Often found in dried fruit and wine)
- **Lupin**
- **Molluscs** like clams, scallops, squid, mussels, oysters and snails etc.

More information:

- Advisory leaflet on non-prepacked food: <http://multimedia.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>
- Allergy e-learning training: <http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>
- Guidance for businesses: www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2014/jul/sme-allergen-guidance
- Find your local food safety officer: www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/