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The Importance of Allergen Control

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Supporting people at risk of severe allergies

About the Anaphylaxis Campaign

- The only UK wide charity solely focused on supporting people at risk of severe allergic reactions
- Membership service for individuals, healthcare professionals and corporates
- Uniquely placed to bring to together the views of allergic consumers, their families, healthcare professionals, food manufacturing and service representatives, regulators and legislators



What is Anaphylaxis?

An extreme and severe allergic reaction affecting the whole body

Symptoms can include;

- Rashes
- Swelling of the mouth and throat
- Abdominal pain and vomiting
- A sudden feeling of weakness
- Collapse and unconsciousness

Prevalence: The Facts

- Food allergy affects 1-2% adults and 5-8% of children
- Equates to about 2 million people in the UK
- Over 200,000 people have been prescribed adrenaline auto injectors

Allergies of all kinds are on the increase

- 1 in 50 children in the UK has a nut allergy
- Peanut allergy cases have tripled in the last decade
- 33% increase in hospital admissions for allergic reaction in the last 5 years
- It is a universal problem affecting all ages and those who care for them
- Unfortunately around 10-20 die each year due to anaphylaxis, caused by both food and non-food allergens

Living at risk of a severe allergic reaction



Practical implications

Takes time to concentrate to locate and read information

Cost may be increased

Precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) is currently voluntary and perceived as restricting choice



Emotional implications

Source of anxiety and stress

Potential exposure occurs daily

Constant vigilance required

Can lead to 'fear of food'

Eating out with a food allergy is perceived as risky

- Must place trust in food business and be confident to ask about allergens
- Must be able to assess whether to order food or be confident enough to walk away
- Anaphylaxis related fatalities, within food service industry and wider society feed into fear and mistrust

Some caterers are reluctant to serve people with food allergy and staff may lack knowledge, language skills, confidence and empathy to assist



Working in partnership with the Food Standards Agency and Allergy UK we want to:

- Help young adults be more aware of their right to safe food
- Be more confident in asking about allergens
- Raise awareness and greater understanding among their peers and food businesses



How the food service can help

- Comply with existing legislation relating to allergens and general food safety law
- Develop robust systems that assess risks in delivery, storage, preparation and delivery of allergen information
- Identify what your organisation and your staff already know
- Understand all the challenges your organisation and staff face
- High turnover of staff, annual leave, sickness and language barriers are challenges not excuses
- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Rectify weaknesses
- Routinely review systems and processes

How the food service can help

- Develop a culture where all staff are considerate of food allergic consumers, well informed about legalisation and internal policies that are in place to keep them safe
- Have clear visible signs that inform customers how to obtain allergen information
- Consider a 'do you have any food allergies' question forming part of customer service
- Have at least one designated 'expert' whose understanding of food allergy, legislation and internal policies relating to food allergies has been developed further
- Report any near-misses to local authorities and conduct a root-cause analysis of the issues with any learning fed back into training and policies

How the food service can help

- Be mindful of the dangers posed by third party food ordering brokers
- The ultimate responsibility for accurate allergen information to be given to the consumer lies with the food business not the third party
- Takeaways meals are considered non-prepacked food sold via distance selling and Food Business's;
- Must make allergen information available at the point of purchase and at the point of delivery

- The new legislation, known as ‘Natasha’s Law’, covers foods that are prepared and packed on the same premises from which they are sold – such as a packaged sandwich or salad made by staff earlier in the day and placed on a shelf for purchase
- The reform will require these products to carry a full list of ingredients with allergens emphasised (for example in bold font or underlined)
- Currently, these foods are not required to carry labels, and if asked by a consumer allergen information must be given in person by the food business
- New information on pre-packed for direct sale food will form part of the FSA’s planned Technical Guidance, to be published by the end of the year

‘Natasha’s Law’ – The details

How the wider food industry can help

- Engagement with the allergic community, Government consultations and local authorities
- A thorough risk assessment to be performed for all food products
- If a real risk of cross-contamination is identified then PAL should be used to communicate this
- The label should then include one of the following statements:
 - may contain X
 - not suitable for someone with X allergy

Why you must get it right

Anaphylaxis fatalities within the food industry have raised the profile of allergies within the public sphere and the industry, most recently the deaths of;



Natasha Ednan-Laperouse who died aged 15 on 17th July 2016 after eating a baguette that was prepacked for direct sale at Pret a Manger Heathrow Airport before boarding a flight



Megan Lee who died aged 15 on 1st January 2017 after eating a takeaway ordered via Just Eat from Royal Spice Indian takeaway in Lancashire



Owen Carey who died aged 18 on 22nd April 2017 after eating a meal earlier in the day from Byron Burger at the O2 in Greenwich

Why you must get it right

The Coroner presiding over the inquest of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse raised concerns about the system for monitoring near misses and the evasion of the spirit of food regulation

The Judge who passed the sentence of the two men found guilty of manslaughter of Megan Lee warned that food suppliers who fail to take proper care will face significant custodial sentences if death results

The Coroner presiding over the inquest of Owen Carey raised concerns of the inadequate allergen training and ineffectiveness of allergen notices on the restaurant menu at Byron. The Coroner also highlighted the lack of a national anaphylaxis register.

FSA unveil
new
protective
measures for
allergic
consumers

- Following Owen Carey's inquest, the FSA have revealed a range of new measures aimed at protecting people with food allergies
- These include:
 - Easy to follow aide memoire for environmental health and trading standards officers focusing on actions related to food allergies
 - Pilot project to develop better reporting of allergic reactions
 - Review on allergen information in the 'Safer Food Better Business' guide

Work with the food industry

Everybody deserves to eat safe food

- We are working with the food industry, regulators and legislators to improve compliance with allergen labelling laws and encourage best practise



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Corporate Member 2019

Any Questions?