



Guide to food safety

by Catriona Smith

About Simply Business

We're one of the UK's largest business insurance providers. Since we started life in 2005, we've helped three million small businesses and self-employed people find the protection that's right for them, from builders to bakers and personal trainers (we cover landlords, too).

How does it work?

Answer a few questions about your business and we'll show you quotes from a range of insurers. After you buy, our Northampton-based team will be with you through every step of your cover, whether you have questions about your policy or you need to make a claim.

Contents

Understanding allergens	4
What are the major food allergens?	5
Allergens poster	6
Ingredients list and allergens chart	7
Food expiry dates	8
Cleaning schedule	11

Allergens

Food and drink businesses have a legal requirement to give allergen information on the goods and products they sell. Not giving this information can have serious consequences.

This guide includes a list of the 14 allergens that must be declared by law, as well as a handy poster you can display in your premises.

We've also included information on expiry dates and a template you can use to list the ingredients in all your dishes so you're ready to answer any questions from customers.



What are the major food allergens?

Allergen	
Celery	
Cereals that contain gluten	including wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan), rye, barley, and oats
Crustaceans	such as prawns, crabs, and lobsters
Eggs	
Fish	
Lupin	which can be found in baked goods, pasta, noodles, sauces, drinks and meat products
Milk	
Molluscs	such as mussels and oysters
Mustard	
Tree nuts	including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios, and macadamia nuts
Peanuts	
Sesame seeds	
Soybeans	
Sulphur dioxide and sulphites	if they're at a concentration of more than ten parts per million

The 14 allergens



**Cereals
containing gluten**



**Sulphur dioxide
& sulphites**



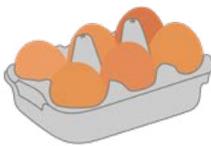
Celery



Tree nuts
e.g. almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts,
Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios,
and macadamia nuts



Milk



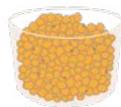
Eggs



Fish



Peanuts



Soybeans



Lupin



Sesame seeds



Molluscs
e.g. mussels, oysters



Mustard



Crustaceans
e.g. prawns,
lobsters, crabs

Ingredients list and allergen chart

Make a list of all the ingredients in each dish you sell and note any allergens.

List of all ingredients	Allergens present	✓
	Celery	
	Cereals that contain gluten	
	Crustaceans	
	Eggs	
	Fish	
	Lupin	
	Milk	
	Molluscs	
	Mustard	
	Tree nuts	
	Peanuts	
	Sesame seeds	
	Soybeans	
	Sulphur dioxide and sulphites	
	Comments	

Food expiry dates

It's good practice to carry out date-marking checks on food each morning before you open or in the evening after you close. Make sure you remove anything that's passed the expiry date and consider reducing anything that's close to its use-by date.



What's the difference between a use-by date and a best before date?

Use-by dates

A use-by date is the final day it's safe to eat the food. **Don't eat, cook, or freeze food after the use-by date** as it could be unsafe to eat or drink, even if stored correctly.

Use-by dates are found on fresh foods that go off quickly, such as meat and dairy products, and ready-to-eat salads. A lot of foods can be frozen before the use-by date but you shouldn't refreeze food that's already been frozen and then defrosted.

Best before dates

A best before date on food (sometimes shown as BBE) is the date when food can start to lose its quality. While it won't be harmful, the flavour or texture might be past its best.

You'll mostly see best before dates on frozen, dried, and tinned food.

Cleaning schedule

Surfaces and equipment should be cleaned regularly to prevent harmful bacteria spreading onto food. Use this schedule to work out what needs cleaning **daily**, **weekly**, and **monthly**.



Related articles

[Natasha's Law for October 2021: what small businesses should know](#)

[How to get a 5 star food hygiene rating](#)

[Allergen information – food labelling regulations for small businesses](#)

[Why do I need business insurance?](#)

Join our small business community



Last updated: September 2021

Image credits

Front cover: Friends Stock - stock.adobe.com

Page 3: Alongkorn - stock.adobe.com

Page 8: Syda Productions - stock.adobe.com

Page 11: WavebreakMediaMicro - stock.adobe.com



© Copyright 2021 Simply Business.