

Improving Food Safety for the FHS Customer

Why it is important to act on information from consumers who say they have an allergy or intolerance to other ingredients not listed as one of the 14?

The FHS customer is someone who has a restricted diet, including food allergies, food intolerances and coeliac disease. This can also include those allergies outside of the #14 major allergens.

There are over 250 allergens which someone can react too. In Europe and the UK, it is only the 14 major allergens that must be labelled/highlighted. However, your organisation may need to be aware of allergens outside of the #14 to ensure you keep the FHS customer safe whilst in your care. For example, hospital patients, college students, university students and school children.

Keeping the customer informed

If you run a hotel, garden centre café, restaurant you can opt to not serve those who have allergens outside the #14 if you are unsure of your menu items / ingredients. However, if you want to go the extra mile and provide for the FHS customer in these circumstances it is important you understand and retain the packaging details for all your menu components to ensure you can review these at the time of the visit and prior if you are able to plan ahead.

On your website the allergy policy could state 'We will endeavour to serve the FHS customer with allergens outside the #14, we would however ask you to contact us in advance to enable preparation for your diet' - this will help with planning. You could ask the guest to come at the start of service which will help avoid the busy periods.

How does your body language help/hinder?

- The FHS are prone to asking lots of questions at all stages of their customer journey, and they may ask the same question several times to seek reassurance.
- In this instance the server or manager needs to be empathetic and understanding of the FHS customers fears, and double check to ensure that the information given is truly accurate. Where necessary show packing, taking a photo is very helpful!
- Rolling eyes and impatient comments will not be well received!
- The FHS customer tend to be loyal to businesses that can cater to their needs, and in turn share this loyalty with other FHS customers.

The little things help!

The FHS customer will normally research before eating out, especially if they have multiple allergies, however this is not always possible, and they may need to find food-on-the-go when travelling.

If unsure when serving the multi-allergy customer, we would advise asking them for ideas about what they can eat, keep it simple and check all components of the dish including sauces and garnishes. If they have complex allergies, then allow them to bring something with them when joining other guests. Maybe suggest a salad which does not require heating, offer a plate so they feel included but be wary of handling.

Please remember!

It is not up to the venue to decide how severe someone's allergy, intolerance or coeliac disease is. When we cater for the FHS customer we should take the same care and precautions for **ALL FHS** customers.

<https://foodallergyaware.co.uk/resources/factsheets/>