

Allergens

Food Code Fact Sheet #31

Six to seven million people in the United States have food allergies. Food allergens are the leading cause of severe life threatening reactions, causing an estimated 30,000 ER visits yearly. It is estimated 100-200 people die each year from food allergy related reactions, in comparison to about 50 deaths from insect sting reactions.

Major Food Allergens

- **milk and milk by products** (such as butter, buttermilk, cheese, cottage cheese, whey, yogurt)
- **eggs and egg substitutes**
- **fish** (such as bass, flounder, cod)
- **crustaceans shell fish** (such as crab, lobster, shrimp, clams, oysters)
- **tree nuts** (such as almonds, pecans, walnuts, chestnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, hickory nuts, pistachios)
- **wheat**
- **peanuts**
- **soybeans**



Peanuts cause the most severe allergic reactions, then shellfish, fish, tree nuts and eggs.

Common Food –Allergic Reactions

Symptoms typically appear within 2 minutes to 2 hours after a person has eaten a food they are allergic to and may include any or all of the following anaphylactic symptoms:

- Tingling sensation in the mouth
- Swelling of the tongue and the throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Hives
- Vomiting
- Abdominal Cramps
- Diarrhea
- Drop in Blood Pressure
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

Responsibility of Person In Charge

- Ability to identify all major allergens in foods served within the establishment that contain known allergens
- Staff in the absence of the Person in Charge must be able to identify all major allergens within foods served

Labeling

One of the following two options must be used to declare all major food allergens:

- **List of common names of all allergens in the product, or**
- Add a description within parenthesis of the allergen food source in plain English following the name of the allergenic ingredient in the ingredient statement, such as “albumen (egg)”, or
- Add the allergen information in a “contains” statement (in a type size no smaller than that used in the list of ingredients), e.g., “Contains: soybean, eggs.” **Contain statement must list all allergens found in the product.**



In the case of tree nuts, the specific type of nut must be declared (e.g., almonds, pecans, or walnuts). The species must be declared for fish (e.g., bass, flounder, or cod) and Crustacean shellfish (crab, lobster, or shrimp)

All ingredients that contain a major food allergen must be labeled, regardless if they might otherwise be exempted from labeling by being a spice, flavoring, or incidental additive.

Additional information can be found at:

www.datcp.state.wi.us/fs
www.cfsan.fda.gov

- Wisconsin Food Allergen Fact Sheet #1 **Raw Materials**
- Wisconsin Food Allergen Fact Sheet #2 **Processing**
- Wisconsin Food Allergen Fact Sheet #3 **Equipment & Sanitation**
- Wisconsin Food Allergen Fact Sheet #4 **Labeling & Packaging**
- Wisconsin Food Allergen Fact Sheet #5 **Labeling Language**
- Wisconsin Division of Food Safety **Check Points For Allergen Inspections**
- Wisconsin Division of Food Safety **Allergen Control Program Worksheet**
- Wisconsin Division of Food Safety **Allergen Derivatives**
- FDA Web site
21 CFR 101 – Food labeling

dfs-3059-0306 (new 3/2006)