

Allergens: full ingredients labelling coming

“Natasha’s Law” will require pre-packaged foods to display a full list of ingredients by 2021

Michael Gove MP (former Environment Secretary) announced the drive to “protect the country’s two million food allergy sufferers”. It follows the tragic death of a teenager who suffered an allergic reaction to a baguette - the new legislation is known as ‘Natasha’s Law’.

Under current laws, food prepared on the premises in which it is sold is not required to display allergen information in writing. It will tighten these rules by requiring all foods that are pre-packed directly for sale to carry a full list of ingredients. This aims to give the growing number of allergy sufferers greater trust in the food they buy.

Michael Gove said: “The government will introduce legislation by the end of summer mandating full ingredients labelling for foods prepacked for direct sale, and the new laws will come into

force by summer 2021 – giving businesses time to adapt to the change.”

“Everyone working with food has a responsibility to ensure that food does not cause harm to customers”

Chair of the Food Standards Agency, Heather Hancock, said: “Whilst it’s impossible to eliminate the risks entirely, we believe this change will mean better protection for allergic consumers.”

The reforms cover labelling requirements for 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 and placed in an on-site shop or café for purchase.

Currently, if asked by a consumer, allergen information must be given in person by the food business. Some believe this will result in an over-reliance on labelling, rather than promoting a dialogue with staff. There have also been comments that this will be difficult for smaller businesses

and may result in less choice for the customer. However, it seems likely that in less than two years, this will become a requirement.

As one park owner put it, adopting a ‘sticky label on everything’ approach (from the biscuits in the welcome pack to take-away salads), helps guests with intolerances and develops a habit of best practice. It could also avoid a terrible situation.

Allergen training – advice from the Food Standards Agency

Your staff should already:

- know the procedures and policies when asked to provide allergen information
- get training on handling allergy information requests
- be able to guarantee that allergen-free meals are served to the right customers
- know the risks of allergen cross-contamination when handling and preparing foods and how to prevent this.



“Everyone working with food has a responsibility to ensure that food does not cause harm to customers

Which ingredients can cause a problem?



Cereals containing gluten



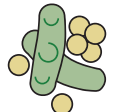
Peanuts



Nuts



Milk



Soya



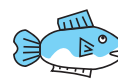
Mustard



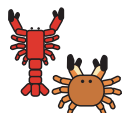
Lupin



Eggs



Fish



Crustaceans

Labelling in the future – how it could be done

The Food Standards Agency currently gives the following allergen labelling guidance for food manufacturers:

Pre-packed food must have an ingredients list. Allergenic ingredients must be emphasised in some way every time they appear in the ingredients list. For example, you can list them in bold, contrasting colours or by underlining them.

How to list allergens on your product

Ingredients: Water, Carrots, Onions, Red Lentils (4.5%) Potatoes, Cauliflower, Leeks, Peas, Cornflour, **Wheat** flour, Salt, **Cream**, Yeast Extract, Concentrated Tomato Paste, Garlic, Whey (**Milk**), Sugar, **Celery** Seed, Sunflower Oil, Herbs and Spice, White Pepper, Parsley

Examples of ingredients that need to be clearly referenced to the allergen are:

- tofu (**soya**)
- tahini paste (**sesame**)
- whey (**milk**)

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-labelling-for-food-manufacturers

Free online training

Free food allergy online training where staff can learn more about food allergies and the allergen information rules is available at <https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>



Sesame seeds



Celery



Sulphur dioxide



Molluscs



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