

# Major Food Allergens

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**CACFP iTrain  
Simple Lesson Plan**

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# Major Food Allergens

## CACFP iTrain Simple Lesson Plan

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
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**Intended Audience:** CACFP personnel and other child care staff  
**Description:** This lesson explains the nine common food allergens.

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## Institute of Child Nutrition| The University of Mississippi

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## Lesson-at-a-Glance

Time	Topic	Activity	Materials
<b>Introduction</b>			
5 minutes	▶ Introduction and Overview		▶ PowerPoint slide deck ▶ Computer ▶ Pens or Pencils
<b>Objective:</b> Identify the nine common allergens.			
15 minutes	▶ Nine Common Food Allergens ▶ Reading Ingredient Statements	▶ Identify Common Allergens	▶ Handout: Top Nine Foods That Cause Allergies ▶ Handout: Label Reading for the Common Allergens
<b>Conclusion</b>			
10 minutes	▶ Lesson Summary ▶ Training Evaluation	▶ Speed Action Planning ▶ Training Evaluation (Optional)	▶ Worksheet: Speed Action Planning ▶ Optional: Training Evaluation & Training Certificate
<b>Total Time: 30 minutes</b>			

## References

Food Allergy Research and Education. (2021). *With the stroke of President Biden's pen, FASTER Act for sesame labeling becomes law*. <https://www.foodallergy.org/media-room/stroke-president-bidens-pen-faster-act-sesame-labeling-becomes-law>

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2018). *Food allergies in school nutrition programs*. <https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/food-allergies-for-school-nutrition-managers-staff/>

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2020). *Food allergy fact sheet: Overview of food allergies*. <https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/food-allergy-fact-sheets>

U.S. Library of Congress. (2021). Summary: S.578 – FASTER Act of 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/578?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22S.+578%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=1>

## Internet Resources

- ▶ Institute of Child Nutrition: [www.theicn.org](http://www.theicn.org)
- ▶ USDA's Team Nutrition: [www.fns.usda.gov/tn](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn)

## Preparation Checklist

**Instructions:** Use the Preparation Checklist to prepare for the training session. Keep track of your progress by checking off tasks as they are completed.

Done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lesson Tasks
<b>Gather Materials</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Training Script
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Computer and Projector Screen
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Worksheets and Handouts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top Foods That Cause Allergies</li> <li>• Label Reading for the Common Allergens</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Pens or pencils (one per participant)
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Optional: Training Certificate/Evaluation/Feedback Form (one per participant)
<b>Prepare for Lesson</b>	
	<b>Before the training day:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Review the training script and research any relevant State or local requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The content reflects the Federal regulations and/or national best practices or standards. However, it's essential to include any additional State or local requirements when presenting this training.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Make enough copies of the handouts for each participant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Test the PowerPoint on the computer and projector screen.
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Optional: Develop and print a session certificate/evaluation/feedback form (one per participant).
	<b>On the training day:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Place pens or pencils on tables (one per participant).
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Distribute materials to each participant.
	<b>On the instructor's table:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Training Script
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Instructor's copy of handouts and/or worksheets
<input type="checkbox"/>	▶ Optional: Session Evaluation/Feedback Forms

## Training Script

**Instructor's Note:** Each section below has an accompanying slide(s). Review and share the content for each PowerPoint slide.

<b>Introduction</b>
<p><b>Welcome!</b></p> <p>Complete the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Distribute handouts to the participants.</li> <li>▶ Welcome the participants to the training.</li> <li>▶ Introduce yourself to the participants, and allow them to introduce themselves by sharing their name and one thing they would like to get from this training.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review Current Knowledge</b></p> <p><b>Ask posing questions:</b> Do you have any children in your child care program with food allergies? What foods are they allergic to?</p>
<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Food allergies can be life threatening. Avoiding allergens keeps children safe. The purpose of this training is to discuss the nine most common allergens for children and to raise the child care center staff's awareness of uncommon food sources of allergens. The training will address key information for limiting the risk of an allergic reaction due to a food allergy.</p>
<b>Objective:</b> Identify the nine common allergens.
<p><b>Common Food Allergens</b></p> <p><b>Ask posing question:</b> What are common food allergens?</p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Food allergies can happen from any food, but nine main foods cause the majority of problems for children. The major allergens are milk, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, fish, shellfish, and sesame. The food allergen could be a small amount left on a cutting board or a spoon. Start meal preparation and service with clean utensils.</p>
<p><b>Reading Ingredient Statements</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> People with food allergies have to make wise food choices through careful label reading. As a child care professional, check every label, every time you purchase and prepare the food for children with food allergies. Allergens are found in many foods. Manufacturers are required to list the ingredients and the presence of the eight major food allergens on the label.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The FASTER Act expands what is considered a major allergen that has to be declared on a food label from eight to nine by adding sesame as a major allergen. This law will take effect in January 2023, but manufacturers may begin incorporating sesame as a major allergen on their food labels before this date. Contact the food manufacturer if there is any uncertainty about a food containing sesame.</p>

<p><b>Milk</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Milk allergens come from the protein in whole milk, 2% milk, 1% milk, skim milk, cream, yogurt, cheese, or ice cream. These items are obvious milk-containing foods. Other less obvious milk ingredients are casein, ghee, butter, curds, lactose, or whey.</p>
<p><b>Eggs</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Eggs, both the whites and yolks, can be an allergen. Eggs frequently are used as an ingredient. Some common names on food labels are albumin (also spelled albumen), egg (dried, powdered, solids, white, and yolk), eggnog, lysozyme, mayonnaise, meringue (meringue powder), ovalbumin, or surimi. Check labels carefully!</p>
<p><b>Wheat</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Wheat sources include bread, rolls, pastry, cookies, cake, and cereal made with wheat. Whole grain and refined wheat both cause allergic reactions. Avoid foods that contain wheat or any of these ingredients: bread crumbs, bulgur, couscous, flour (all-purpose, bread, cake, durum, enriched, graham, high-gluten, high-protein, instant, pastry, self-rising, soft wheat, steel ground, stone ground, whole wheat), pasta, and wheat (bran, durum, germ, gluten, grass, malt, sprouts, starch).</p> <p>Some unexpected sources of wheat are processed meats, rice cakes, salad dressings, sauces, and soups. As a reminder, grain-based desserts are not reimbursable in the CACFP.</p>
<p><b>Peanuts</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Peanuts stand alone as a major allergen. Avoid foods that contain peanuts or any of these ingredients: Arachis oil (another name for peanut oil), artificial nuts, beer nuts, cold-pressed, expelled or extruded peanut oil, goobers, ground nuts, mixed nuts, nut meat, nut pieces, peanut butter, peanut flour, and peanut protein hydrolysate.</p>
<p><b>Tree Nuts</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Another allergen is tree nuts, which include pine nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, and pecans. Avoid foods that contain tree nuts or any of these ingredients: artificial nuts, natural nut extract, nut butters (e.g., cashew butter), nut distillates/alcoholic extracts, nut meal, nut meat, nut milk (e.g., almond milk, cashew milk), nut oils (e.g., walnut oil, almond oil, nut paste (e.g., almond paste), and nut pieces.</p>
<p><b>Soy</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Soy is added to many foods as a way to add protein or enhance flavor.</p>
<p><b>Fish</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Fish from both fresh water and the sea cause allergic reactions in some children. Catfish, codfish, and tuna fish equally create problems. Also, avoid these fish products: fish oil and fish sticks. Some unexpected sources of fish are barbecue sauce, caesar dressing, imitation or artificial fish or shellfish (e.g., surimi, also known as “sea legs” or “sea sticks”), and Worcestershire sauce.</p>

<p><b>Shellfish</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Shellfish are separated from fish as an allergy group. Some children can eat fish but not shellfish. Avoid foods that contain shellfish or any of these ingredients on the label: barnacle, crab, crawfish (crawdada, crayfish, and écrevisse), krill, lobster (langouste, langoustine, Moreton bay bugs, scampi, and tomalley), prawns, and shrimp (crevette, scampi.)</p>
<p><b>Sesame</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Sesame is usually found in foods in the form of seeds or oil. A protein found in sesame is what causes an allergic reaction.</p> <p>In 2021, the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act (FASTER) was passed into law. This act expands what is considered a major allergen that has to be declared on a food label from eight to nine by adding sesame as a major allergen. This law will take effect in January 2023, but manufacturers may begin incorporating sesame as a major allergen on their food labels before this date. Contact the food manufacturer if there is any uncertainty about a food containing sesame.</p>
<p><b>Activity: Nine Common Allergens</b>  <b>Time: 10 minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Purpose:</b> List and describe the foods that cause the most food allergies in children.</li> <li>▶ <b>Materials Needed: Top Nine Foods That Cause Allergies handout</b></li> <li>▶ <b>Instructions:</b> Using the Top Nine Foods That Cause Allergies handout, identify foods you serve at your child care center that contain some of the major allergens. Go around the group and ask for one allergen and one allergen food served at their child care center. Go back over the major allergens and at the bottom of the page, write a food you serve that would be a combination of several allergens. For example, pizza contains milk, wheat, and sometimes soy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p><b>Lesson Conclusion</b></p> <p><b>Share core content:</b> Nine major allergens create the majority of allergic reactions in children. The allergens are milk, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, fish, shellfish, and sesame. Several allergens can be found in the same menu item. Read labels carefully for allergens every time you purchase and prepare the food! Allergic reactions can be created with a large amount or a very small amount of the allergen. Remember that while this training only covers the nine major allergens, other foods can cause allergic reactions in children.</p> <p><b>Ask posing question:</b> What questions do you have concerning common food allergens?</p>

**Activity: Speed Action Planning****Time: 5 minutes**

- ▶ **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to establish future steps for applying the information in their workplace.
- ▶ **Materials Needed:** Speed Action Planning worksheet, Planner or Cell Phone Calendar App, and Pencil/Pen
- ▶ **Instructions:** Distribute the Speed Action Planning worksheet. Inform participants that it is important to develop a plan for using the training's information. Ask them to take 1–2 minutes to answer the following three questions to establish an action plan.
  - What did you learn in this training?
  - How will you apply this information in your current or future role?
  - When will you apply this information?

Once the participants have finished, encourage them to save this goal to a planner, calendar app, or other sources to ensure they follow through with their plan. Following this activity, dismiss the participants from the training.

**Thank You!**

Complete the following tasks:

- ▶ Conclude the training.
- ▶ Refer participants to the Institute of Child Nutrition for additional information at [helpdesk@theicn.org](mailto:helpdesk@theicn.org) or 800-321-3054.
- ▶ Distribute any certificates or evaluations.

**Top Nine Foods That Cause Allergies**

- ▶ Milk
- ▶ Eggs
- ▶ Peanuts
- ▶ Tree nuts (for example, walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, and pecans)
- ▶ Wheat
- ▶ Soy
- ▶ Fish
- ▶ Crustacean shellfish (for example, shrimp, lobster, and crab)
- ▶ Sesame



**Reading Ingredient Statements for Food Allergens**

**Food Allergen Labeling**  
 The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act is a Federal law that became effective January 2006. It mandates that the labels of foods containing the eight major food allergens be declared in plain language on the product. The FASTER Act of 2021 added sesame as the ninth major food allergen.

*Nine Major Allergens:*

▶ Egg	▶ Milk	▶ Tree nuts
▶ Fish	▶ Shellfish	▶ Wheat
▶ Peanuts	▶ Soy	▶ Sesame

Note that as long as there are no known allergies, it is important to offer and serve a variety of foods, including those identified as major allergens.

There are specifics on where and how the information is to be presented. The food ingredient **MUST** be in the ingredient in parenthesis following the ingredient or written as the usual name of the major food allergen or listed after the ingredient list by stating product "Contains" the particular allergen.

**"Contains" followed by the name**  
 Example: "Contains: milk and wheat"

**Parenthetical statement or usual name in the list of ingredients**  
 Example: "wheat flour and albumin (egg)"

**Precautionary Labeling**  
 There is another type of allergy labeling called precautionary labeling. This type of labeling is NOT covered in the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act, so it varies widely from manufacturer to manufacturer. One type of precautionary labeling is the "May Contain" statement. Other types of precautionary labeling are the "Made on Equipment" and "Processed in Facilities" statements.

**"May Contain" statement**  
 Example: "May contain traces of peanuts"

**"Made on Equipment"**  
 Example: "Made on equipment that makes products containing eggs and tree nuts"

**"Processed in Facilities"**  
 Example: "Processed in facilities that also process wheat."

**Reading Ingredient Statements**  
 Ingredient statements should be read when the product is received since suppliers may make product substitutions, formulas may change, or vendors could change. Check all labels carefully every time. Do not rely on specifications, fact sheets, or the last shipment. Read the label each time the product is received. Contact the manufacturer if you have any questions or are uncertain about the food item.

**Holding Labels**  
 It is recommended that labels of all products served be kept for 24 hours as a precaution, so the label is available in case someone has an allergic reaction. Unlike a foodborne illness outbreak

## Speed Action Planning

**Instructions:** Today's training featured key information on the nine common food allergens. Answer the following three questions to establish a plan for using the information.

**1. What did you learn in this training?**

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**2. How will you apply this information in your current or future roles?**

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**3. When will you apply this information (e.g., one week, one month, six months, etc.)?**

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