

Manager's Corner

Eight Major Allergens

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NUTRITION



OPERATIONS



ADMINISTRATION



COMMUNICATIONS/
MARKETING

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2630 Federal, State, and Local
Food Safety
2640 Food Safety Culture

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PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Professional Standards

FOOD SAFETY AND HACCP TRAINING – 2600

Employee will be able to effectively utilize all food safety program guidelines and health department regulations to ensure optimal food safety.

2620 – Food Safety-General

Practice general food safety procedures.

2630 – Federal, State, and local food safety regulations

Practice Federal, State, and local food safety regulations and guidance.

2640 – Food Safety Culture

Promote a culture of food safety behaviors in the school community.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Eight Major Allergens is designed to empower managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This lesson plan contains:

- Learning objective
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- An activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff

Lesson Overview

Instructions for lesson:

- Review the lesson objective and background information.
- Review why it is important.
- Ask staff the questions.
- Facilitate the activity outlined.
- Provide time for staff to ask questions.

Objective: Recognize the eight major allergens – eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat – and possible food sources.

Background information: Schools are required to make reasonable accommodations for students who are unable to eat regular meals due to disabilities (including food allergies) certified by a State licensed healthcare provider. There are eight (8) food allergens that account for 90% of all food allergic reactions in the United States:

- Egg Allergies
- Fish Allergies
- Milk Allergies
- Peanut Allergies
- Shellfish Allergies
- Soy Allergies
- Tree Nut Allergies
- Wheat Allergies

If you are uncertain about whether a food item contains an allergen, check with your supervisor. If you are unable to identify all of the food ingredients, do not serve that food to a child with a known allergy.

Why it is important: School nutrition employees are the front line defense to help prevent food-related allergic reactions in the school environment. They should be familiar with the eight major food allergens so they can be mindful of them on ingredient labels. These allergies cause roughly 90% of all food-allergic reactions in the United States.

Questions for Staff

- **Can egg substitutes be used to prepare foods for children with egg allergies?**
 - No. Typically, egg substitutes are made from egg whites, which are highly allergenic for children with egg allergies.

- **Can a child with a fish allergy eat Worcestershire sauce?**
 - No, it contains anchovies, which is a fish.
- **If a product is labeled “dairy-free” or “nondairy,” is it safe for a person with milk allergies?**
 - No. The term “dairy-free” does not have a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulated definition, so there is no guarantee that the product does not contain milk proteins. The FDA definition of “nondairy” states that the product can include milk proteins and still be labeled “nondairy.” Ingredient labels should always be checked for the presence of milk even if one of these terms is used on the packaging.
- **If a student has a peanut allergy, what is a good shelf-stable alternative to a peanut butter sandwich for a field trip?**
 - One option may be to substitute the peanut butter with soy or sunflower seed butters. A few other options include a cheese sandwich, tuna packet with crackers, or bean dip and chips.
- **What are examples of shellfish?**
 - There are two types of shellfish: crustaceans (crab, lobster, and shrimp) and mollusks (clams, mussels, and oysters). Crustacean shellfish are considered the most allergenic. Because many people with allergies to one type of shellfish are also allergic to other types, it may be advised to avoid all shellfish.
- **Can soy be found in meat products?**
 - Yes, it can be used as a filler in processed meat such as chicken nuggets, hamburgers, and hotdogs.
- **What are some examples of tree nuts?**
 - Common nuts: almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, filberts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts.
- **Is gluten-free the same thing as wheat-free?**
 - Gluten-free diets are not the same as wheat-free diets. Gluten is found in wheat, barley, and rye. It can also be found in products like bread, pasta, baked goods, and other processed foods.

Additional Resources:

- Food Allergy Research Education – Tips for Avoiding Your Allergen
www.foodallergy.org

Activity: Food Allergens

Activity materials included in this document:

No supplemental materials are included in this document.

Materials provided by the school nutrition operation:

- Chart paper
- Marker
- Copies of handouts - Food Allergy Fact Sheets can be found online (www.theicn.org/foodsafety). Click Food Allergy Resources, then select and print copies of each of the following fact sheets for staff members to share.
 - Egg Allergies
 - Fish Allergies
 - Milk Allergies
 - Peanut Allergies
 - Shellfish Allergies
 - Soy Allergies
 - Tree Nut Allergies
 - Wheat Allergies

Activity Instructions:

- Print the handout(s) and/or worksheet(s).
- On a piece of chart paper, list the names of the eight major food allergens (egg, fish, milk, peanuts, shellfish (crustacean shellfish), soy, tree nuts, and wheat) with space in between.
- Give the staff the eight Food Allergy Fact Sheets. Have them look at the sections, "What foods contain [Allergen]?" and "Common Menu Items that May Contain [Allergen]."
- Have staff read through the list of common menu items on the handout they received and name one to two food sources of the allergen that they were unaware contained that allergen. Write those sources under the appropriate allergen on the chart.
- Ask the staff to add food sources for each allergen.
- Ask some of the provided questions on the fact sheet and refer staff to the Food Allergy Fact Sheets to help answer.
- Answer any questions staff may have when finished.

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