

# Adult Day Care Food Allergy Fact Sheet



## Managing Food Allergies: Adult Day Care Staff

### 1. Locate and read the adult day care site's procedures for handling food allergies.

- Understand your role in keeping participants with food allergies safe.
- Know how to activate your site's emergency action plan if a participant has an allergic reaction.

### 2. Be familiar with each participant's food allergy(s) and food allergy action plan.

- Know your site's procedures to identify participants who have food allergies.
- Know how to implement each participant's food allergy action plan (i.e., emergency care plan). Keep them in a secure place that is easy to find.
- Keep the details of each participant's food allergy(s) confidential.
- Seek clarification if the medical statement is not clear. Ask your manager or director to contact the participating adult, family, caregiver, or guardian, if necessary.
- Do not serve any food that contains or has come in contact with an allergen to a participant with a food allergy. If a food is suspected to contain or you cannot confirm that it does not contain the food allergen, avoid serving the food.
- Follow the instructions in the participant's medical statement if available. If a food allergy can be accommodated within the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) adult meal pattern, a medical statement is not required. For this situation, be familiar with how to safely serve the participant with the food allergy.

### 3. Read ingredient lists to check for allergens (foods that can cause allergic reactions).

- Most ingredient lists state the major eight foods causing allergic reactions using their common name (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and crustacean shellfish).
  - In 2021, the *Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act* (FASTER) was passed into law. This act adds sesame as a major allergen. It took effect on January 1, 2023. Contact the food manufacturer if there is any uncertainty about a food containing sesame.
- Check food labels for advisory statements such as "may contain," "produced on shared equipment," or "produced in a plant that uses." These foods should not be served to participants with food allergies.
- Check food labels and ingredient lists for allergens on every product each time the product is purchased and received. Contact the manufacturer if the label is unclear.
- Maintain food labels for a minimum of 24 hours after the food is served.



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### 4. Avoid cross-contact when preparing and serving food.

- Personal Hygiene
  - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after each task. Using water alone or hand sanitizer alone does not properly remove allergens.
  - Wash your hands and change your single-use gloves before handling allergen-free foods.
- Cleaning and Sanitizing
  - Wash, rinse, and sanitize all cookware and utensils before and after each use when preparing allergen-free foods. Using warm soapy water and friction is the only way to properly remove allergens.
  - Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces before use.
- Food Preparation
  - Designate utensils and cookware to be used for allergen-free foods for that meal.
  - Designate an allergen-free zone in the kitchen. When working with multiple food allergies, set up procedures to prevent cross-contact.
  - Follow standardized recipes exactly as written.
  - Use freshly laundered potholders and oven mitts when making allergen-free food items. Wash hands before and after using potholders and oven mitts.
- Food Service
  - Wash, rinse, and sanitize tables and chairs before and after each meal and as needed.
  - Use designated serving utensils for allergen-free foods.
  - Prevent participants from sharing utensils, food, drinks, and straws.
  - When serving meals family style to participants with food allergies, take special precautions to prevent cross-contact. Take steps to assure a participant with allergies is not accidentally exposed to foods that can cause allergic reactions. Label all allergy-safe foods and have the allergic participant take the foods they can eat from the regular menu before all other participants to prevent cross-contact.



### References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). *Voluntary guidelines for managing food allergies in schools and early care and education programs*. [www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/)
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- U.S. Library of Congress. (2021). *Summary: S.578 – FASTER Act of 2021*. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/senate/bills/578?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22S.+578%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=1>

### For More Information

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology  
[www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies)

Food Allergy Research & Education  
[www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)

Food Insight (website sponsored by International Food Information Council Foundation)  
[www.foodinsight.org](http://www.foodinsight.org)

Institute of Child Nutrition  
[www.theicn.org/foodsafety](http://www.theicn.org/foodsafety)

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases  
[niaid.nih.gov](http://niaid.nih.gov)



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National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education  
[www.nrckids.org](http://www.nrckids.org)

School Nutrition Association  
[www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org)

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
[www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety/food-safety-resources](http://www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety/food-safety-resources)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
*Food Allergens*  
[www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/FoodAllergens/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/FoodAllergens/default.htm)

USDA National Agricultural Library  
[www.nal.usda.gov](http://www.nal.usda.gov)

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