

# Family Child Care Food Allergy Fact Sheets



## Fish Allergies

Fish is one of the nine major allergens in the United States. Together, they cause about 90% of all food-related allergic reactions. This fact sheet will discuss how to manage fish allergies in a family child care.

### Which fish are most likely to cause allergic reactions?

Salmon, tuna, and halibut are the fish most likely to cause allergic reactions, but it is recommended that individuals with any fish allergies avoid all types. The term fish includes all types of finned fish. Fish protein is most likely to cause an allergic reaction. Fish gelatin and fish oil should also be avoided as they may cause a reaction. Shellfish, although highly allergenic, is not in the same family as finned fish, so a person who has a fish allergy may be able to eat shellfish.



### How are fish written in the ingredient list of a food label?

The *Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA)* requires that the specific type of fish (such as salmon or tuna) must be written in the ingredient list on the food label. The following list shows some of the common names of fish.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anchovies</li><li>• Bass</li><li>• Catfish</li><li>• Cod</li><li>• Flounder</li><li>• Grouper</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Haddock</li><li>• Hake</li><li>• Halibut</li><li>• Herring</li><li>• Mahi mahi</li><li>• Perch</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pike</li><li>• Pollock</li><li>• Salmon</li><li>• Scrod</li><li>• Snapper</li><li>• Sole</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Swordfish</li><li>• Tilapia</li><li>• Trout</li><li>• Tuna</li></ul>
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## What foods contain fish?

It is important to read all food labels to check for fish or fish ingredients. The following chart lists products that may contain fish and should be avoided.

Fish Foods and Ingredients		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bouillabaisse</li> <li>• Ceviche (made with finned fish)</li> <li>• Cioppino (fish and shellfish stew)</li> <li>• Fish curry</li> <li>• Fish eggs (caviar, roe)</li> <li>• Fish filet</li> <li>• Fish fried rice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish gelatin, made from the skin and bones of fish (kosher gelatin)</li> <li>• Fish oil</li> <li>• Fish sauces (Nam pla, Nuoc mam)</li> <li>• Fish sticks or nuggets</li> <li>• Fish stir-fry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish stock (fish bouillon, fumet)</li> <li>• Gelfite fish</li> <li>• Imitation crab/seafood, surimi (usually made from pollock)</li> <li>• Run Down</li> <li>• Sushi/sashimi</li> </ul>
Other Foods, Products, and Ingredients That May Contain Fish		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barbecue sauce (may contain Worcestershire sauce)</li> <li>• Caesar salad and dressing (contains anchovies)</li> <li>• Deep fried items (risk of cross-contact)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egg rolls</li> <li>• Gumbo</li> <li>• Items fortified with EPA or DHA (omega-3 fatty acids derived from fish/fish-oil products)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paella</li> <li>• Worcestershire sauce (contains anchovies)</li> </ul>

Many items may not contain fish but may be produced in a facility where fish is processed or used as an ingredient. As a result, cross-contact with fish may occur. Cross-contact is the accidental transfer of allergens to an allergen-free food or surface. Do not give a food to a child with a fish allergy that is labeled with an advisory statement such as being produced or manufactured in a facility with fish. If going on a field trip or ordering out food, avoid seafood restaurants because the possibility of cross-contact is very high.

### What substitutes can be used for fish in meals?

The following chart lists common menu items and condiments that may be used as safe substitutes for items that contain fish. Always carefully read ingredient lists, even for foods that do not usually contain fish.

Menu Items and Condiments That May Contain Fish*	Possible Substitutes**†
Caesar salad dressing (contains anchovies), Worcestershire sauce (contains anchovies), fish sauce	Dressings and sauces that do not contain fish (Italian, honey mustard, ranch)
Curry, fried rice, or stir-fried dishes with fish or fish sauce	Curry, fried rice, or stir-fried dishes without fish or fish sauce
Fish fillet	Beef, pork, poultry, shellfish, beans, peas, legumes
Fish sticks or nuggets	Chicken nuggets, patties
Tuna salad	Chicken, turkey, egg salad

\*All meals and snacks claimed for reimbursement must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Please visit [www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks) for more information. For children with food allergies, providers are required to provide meal modifications as stated in the child's medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. A State licensed healthcare professional is defined as an individual authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law. Registered dietitians can also submit medical statements for meal modifications for children with disabilities. Registered dietitians are not required to have a State license. CACFP operations are required to implement this change by October 1, 2025. Meal modifications may require providing meals and snacks that do not meet CACFP meal pattern requirements. These meals are reimbursable as long as there is a medical statement on file documenting the necessary accommodations. Providers may choose to accommodate food-related disabilities without a signed medical statement if the meal modifications still meet the meal pattern requirements. Refer to the *Family Child Care Food Allergy Fact Sheets – Accommodating Children with Food Allergies* for more information.

†Always review the ingredient list to verify ingredients and check for possible cross-contact.

### How can cross-contact affect a child with fish allergies?

Cross-contact is a concern for all allergens, but there are a few specific concerns related to fish allergies. Deep-fat frying is not an allowable method of cooking in family child care, but if fish is fried or sautéed in a pan, the cooking oil can become contaminated. If serving children with fish allergies, never cook other food in the same oil that was used to cook fish. Additionally, fish proteins can become airborne in steam from cooking, so be careful not to expose a child with a fish allergy to the steam.



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### For More Information

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

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

U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
*Food Allergens*  
[www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/food-allergies](http://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/food-allergies)

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