



Serving guests with food allergy during COVID-19



Foodservice tips

Did you know... that over 3 million Canadians are affected by food allergy, the majority of whom eat out frequently? Once they find an establishment they trust, they are loyal, repeat consumers.

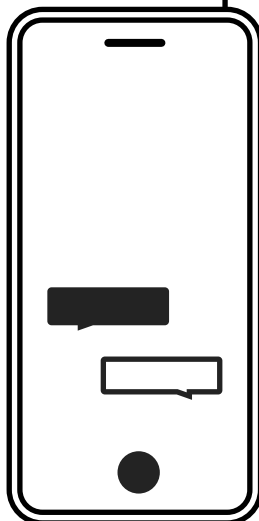
With the increase in take-out and delivery orders during COVID-19 and the reduction of direct face-to-face conversations, it's a good time to revisit how you can meet the needs of your guests with food allergy. It is critical that they know what is in their food so they can make safe food choices and avoid their allergens.

Specifically, you should consider:

How your establishment provides access to ingredient information to enable safe food choices

How the requests of your guests are fulfilled to ensure they receive what is ordered

Knowing how to meet their needs and being able to execute it is the difference between a good and a bad guest experience. A good experience can help you keep and grow your loyal consumer base.





Tips for foodservice operators & restaurants

1) Ensure staff take all food allergy requests seriously and know their role in managing these requests

- Ensure your staff understands the importance of food allergy, potential consequences, and takes all requests seriously.
- Have a process in place for all food allergy-related requests and for addressing guest questions, including options to reach you via phone, email and online.
- Make all employees aware of how your establishment will handle food allergy requests - from first point of contact with the guest through to serving the food. Everyone needs to know their role.

2) Provide guests with easy access to ingredient information

- Provide accurate and up-to-date ingredient information, including all ingredients used in each menu option and any precautionary allergen labelling statements (e.g. "May contain" on packaged products).
- Make this ingredient information available through ALL your sales channels, including in-house, phone orders, your website, 3rd party online ordering sites and apps.
- Give guests the opportunity to speak to one of your senior staff members (e.g. manager, chef) for any ingredient-related or preparation questions during regular business hours.

3) Ensure your ordering process captures and shares food allergy requests

- Prompt guests to tell you about their food allergy when taking their orders regardless of whether that is over the phone, in person or online ("Do you have a food allergy we should be aware of?") and ensure that this information is made available to all staff who prepare, plate, serve and deliver the order.
- If orders are being submitted through a 3rd party delivery service, ensure the online ordering platform captures food allergy requests and shares it with those preparing and serving the food.

4) ✓ Double check the order before it's sent out

- Mistakes can happen so it's important to re-confirm the order to ensure it meets the guest's allergy request prior to it being sent out for delivery or at time of pick-up.
- When possible, this should be done by a senior staff member, preferably the chef or manager.

5) 🌸 Make it operationally easier by managing menu options & ingredient substitutions

- Keep all ingredient labels on food products coming into your establishment.
FOR EXISTING MENU ITEMS:
- Avoid adding any new ingredient or common allergens to existing recipes; if not possible, ensure all ingredient information is updated to reflect any new ingredients/allergens
- Avoid ingredient substitutions, whenever possible
- If substitutions are necessary, update ALL sources of ingredient information with new ingredient information immediately and share with FOH & BOH staff
- Work with suppliers you know and trust who can provide ingredient information for all products
FOR NEW MENU OPTIONS:
- Consider the priority allergens when creating new dishes
- Document all ingredients and provide them to your guests through ALL your sales channels (e.g. in-house, web, 3rd party apps)

6) 📄 Resources to help you

- Check out foodallergycanada.ca for additional information on food allergy
- [Take the course - Allergen Training for Foodservice](#)

Communication is key for ensuring guests with food allergy have a great experience and stay safe.

Thank you for doing your part!