

Managing cross contamination with food allergies

What are food allergies?

A food allergy is a response by the body to a protein in the food, which is called an allergen. Allergens cause the body to react as if the protein is dangerous, like a parasite, causing a reaction and symptoms to develop.

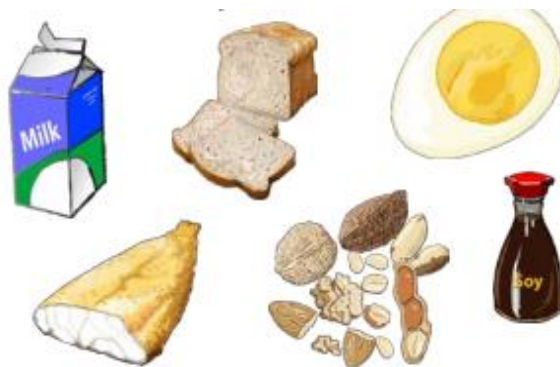
Symptoms can develop within 30 minutes of coming into contact with the allergen. Symptoms can range from mild (e.g. swelling, itchy mouth) to severe (e.g. anaphylaxis). Even small amounts of a food allergen can cause a reaction. For example, it only takes 1/1000th of a peanut to cause a reaction.

Cooking with others.

Cooking with others is a fun way to socialise and bring people together. When cooking for someone with a food allergy, it becomes a little trickier. Management of *cross-contamination* risk is essential when there are true food allergies.

What is cross contamination?

Cross contamination is when one food comes into contact with another food, resulting in the proteins (what your body reacts to) mixing. For example, using a barbeque to cook eggs, followed by bacon and only wiping down the barbeque with a wet cloth between. This type of cleaning will not remove all trace amounts of egg left on the barbeque and can contaminate the bacon. If a person who is allergic to eggs eats this bacon, they will have the same allergic reaction as if they had eaten the egg.



Effective cleaning

Effective cleaning is an important part of cross contamination management. Even a trace of food on a spoon or spatula that is invisible to us can cause an allergic reaction.

You should wash your hands with soap and warm running water before and after eating. Washing your hands with only water and/or hand sanitiser is not enough to remove all allergens.

Cleaning benches with water will not be enough to remove all allergens. Make sure all benches have been cleaned with common household cleaning products or watered-down bleach. It is recommended to clean the cooking utensils, countertops and plates, even if already cleaned.

Eating is a big part of our lives and being able to share this with others is important. It is recommended that if you have an allergy, you give your friends, family, colleagues etc. a copy of this resource to help them prepare safe meals for you.

5 Main Tips for managing cross-contamination:

- 1. Read food labels.** If you do not know how to read food labels to identify if a food contains a food allergen, check out the NEMO [‘Label reading for food allergies’](#) resource.
- 2. Do not use appliances that are difficult to thoroughly clean** (e.g. toasters). Having a separate appliance that is only used for the person with the allergy is often necessary.
- 3. Prepare the allergy free meal first** and cover once finished to avoid allergen contamination from other meals being served.
- 4. Avoid using communal jars** as the risk of cross-contamination is high (e.g. crumbs left in jam/chutney/mustard). It is recommended to buy separate products.
- 5. Be careful of high risk areas:**
 - Inadequately cleaned baking trays, barbeques, deep fryers, toasters.

Nutrition Information		
Servings per package: 1		
Serving size: 35g		
	Per Serve	Per 100g
Energy	501kJ	1430kJ
Protein	3.5g	10g
Fat	0.4g	1
Saturated	0.2g	0.5g
Carbohydrates		
Total	25.3g	72.2g
Sugar	7.5g	21.5g
Fibre	3.4g	9.7g
Sodium	185mg	535mg

Ingredients: Cereals (44% wheat flour, malted, malted flour, sugar, wheat gluten, rice, malt, barley malt extract, minerals (calcium carbonate, iron), mineral salt (sodium bicarbonate), natural colour (paprika, turmeric), vitamins (vitamin C, niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, vitamin B5, folate).
Contains gluten containing cereals.
May contain traces of peanuts and/or tree nuts.



Summary

- Ensure you take the necessary steps and avoid cross-contamination when cooking with others with a true food allergy.
- Refer to the 5 main tips above for managing cross contamination.

For further information, go to:

1. **ASCIA** (The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy). ASCIA is the peak professional body of allergy and clinical immunology specialists in Australia and New Zealand. See their website www.allergy.org.au for further details. For further information please see [Dietary Avoidance for Food Allergy Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#).
2. **Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia** (A&AA). A&AA is an Australian organisation that aims to improve awareness of allergies through education and research. They assist with managing allergies for individuals, families, schools, workplaces, the government and food industries in Australia. Check out their website www.allergyfacts.org.au for further information and to become a member of A&AA.
3. **FSANZ** (Food Standards Australia and New Zealand). FSANZ is a bi-national government agency who develop codes and standards for foods, including labelling, food safety and additives www.foodstandards.gov.au

For further information, contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist: _____