

Adverse reactions to food and the management of allergens in the classroom

12/03/25

What will be covered?



- Adverse reactions to food including allergies, intolerances and autoimmune disease and the impact of these on health.
- The most common food allergens and most common food intolerances.
- Cutting out specific food and food groups and the impact on the diet.
- Allergen labelling.
- Food hygiene and safety policies and risk assessments in school (allergens).
- Reducing the risk of harm from allergens when storing, preparing, cooking and tasting food in school.
- Links to [Food – a fact of life](https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk).
- Suggestions for further reading and sources of information.

How many people have food allergies and intolerances?

The PAFA project found that more than **30% of adults** reported some types of adverse reactions when eating food - meaning they had an illness or trouble when eating a particular food.

When this was investigated further through a clinical assessment, it was found that around **6% of the UK adult population** are estimated to have a clinically confirmed food allergy. This equates to around **2.4 million adults** in the UK.

- foods such as **peanuts and tree nuts** like hazelnuts, walnuts and almonds, are most likely to cause an allergic reaction
- many individuals also had **allergies to fresh fruits** such as apple, peach and kiwi fruit. These were associated with allergies to birch pollen, also known as pollen-food allergy syndrome or oral allergy syndrome
- allergies to foods like **milk, fish, shrimp and mussels** were uncommon
- childhood food allergies persist into early adulthood, and then further increase with around half of food allergies developing in later adulthood

How many people have food allergies and intolerances?

In the UK, **40% of children** have been diagnosed with an allergy. The four most common allergies in children are **food allergy**, eczema, asthma, and hay fever.

Almost **1 in 12 (8%)** young children suffer from a food allergy.



[Allergy UK – allergy in childhood](https://www.allergyuk.org/allergy-in-childhood) (accessed March 2025)

Food allergy doubles in the UK over last decade but many still without treatment

by Ryan O'Hare
28 August 2024



In a [new analysis](#), researchers from Imperial College London estimate that the number of people living with food allergies in England has increased significantly between 2008 and 2018. The analysis found that up to 4% of preschool-aged children have a food allergy, while rates in adults were around 1%. These rates are likely representative of the UK.

The analysis, published in the journal *Lancet Public Health*, also found that many people with a previous severe reaction from a food allergy (anaphylaxis) were not prescribed adrenaline autoinjector “pens” which can be lifesaving.

The number of people with food allergy in the UK has more than doubled since 2008, with the largest increase seen in young children.

RELATED STORIES



<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/255793/food-allergy-doubles-uk-over-last/>

What is meant by food allergy and intolerance?

Food intolerance

A food intolerance is difficulty digesting certain foods and having an unpleasant physical reaction to them.



Food allergy

An allergic reaction to a food is an inappropriate reaction by the body's immune system to the ingestion of a food.



Food allergy or food intolerance?



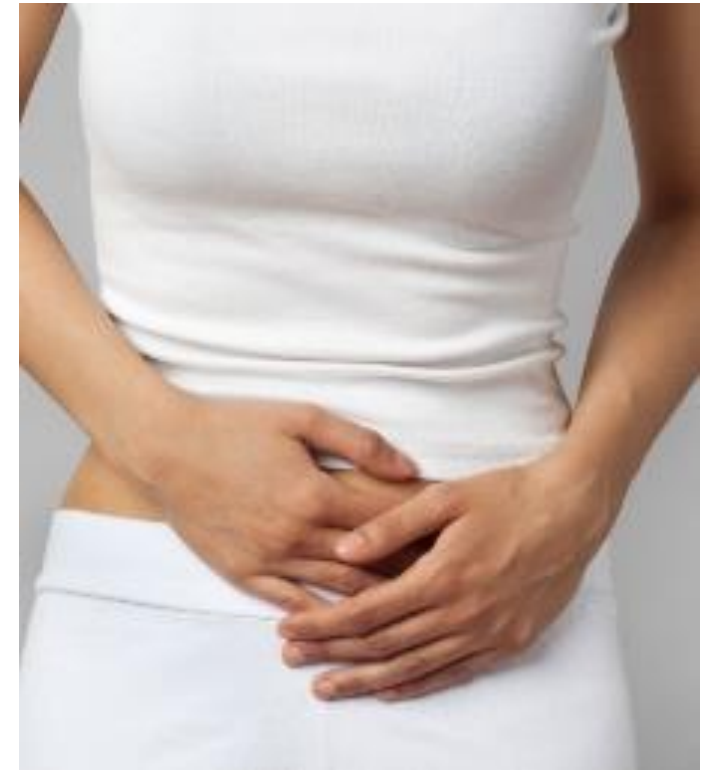
Food allergy	Food intolerance
A reaction from the immune system	Does not involve the immune system
Symptoms come on rapidly after eating just a small amount of the food	Causes symptoms many hours after eating a reasonable amount of the problem food
Often triggered by specific foods (e.g. peanuts or shellfish)	Can be caused by many different foods
Can be serious and life threatening	Tends to cause unpleasant symptoms



[Source: NHS](#)

Food intolerance

- A food intolerance is difficulty digesting certain foods and having an unpleasant physical reaction to them.
- Symptoms include bloating and stomach pain.
- Food intolerance does not include food poisoning from bacteria and viruses, moulds, chemicals, toxins and irritants in food, nor does it include food aversion (dislike and subsequent avoidance of various food).



Testing for food intolerance

Food intolerance is usually tested through monitoring your symptoms and the food you eat.

This is normally conducted through taking a food diary and trialling an elimination diet. This should be done under supervision of a medical professional.

An elimination diet includes:

- cutting out the suspected food for 2 to 6 weeks and see if your symptoms improve;
- reintroduce the food to see if symptoms return.



Lactose intolerance (example)

- One type of food intolerance is caused by the lack of an enzyme that is needed to digest a component of food.
- The most common example of this is lactose intolerance where sufferers have low levels of the enzyme lactase needed to digest lactose, the sugar found in milk.
- Lactase breaks down the lactose so that it can be absorbed. If lactase levels are low, undigested lactose passes into the large intestine where it causes pain and diarrhoea.



Coeliac disease

- Coeliac disease is an autoimmune reaction to gluten, where the body's immune system turns against itself.
- Coeliac disease affects at least 1 in 100 people in the UK. However only 36% of people who have the condition have been clinically diagnosed.
- People with coeliac disease must avoid foods that contain gluten throughout their life.



Food allergy

- An allergic reaction to a food can be described as an inappropriate reaction by the body's immune system to the ingestion of a food that in the majority of individuals causes no adverse effects.
- Allergic reactions to food vary in severity and can be potentially fatal.
- In food allergy the immune system does not recognise as safe a protein component of the food to which the individual is sensitive (such as some peanut, milk or egg proteins).



Anaphylaxis

- A severe allergic reaction can sometimes lead to anaphylaxis.
- When someone has an anaphylactic reaction, they may have serious symptoms in different parts of the body at the same time. These symptoms can develop within minutes.
- Although it is rare, some of the foods known to cause anaphylaxis in the UK include peanuts, tree nuts, cows' milk, eggs, fish, shellfish and soy.



Food allergen labelling



GLUTEN



LUPIN



CELERY



CRUSTACEANS



MILK



SULPHUR DIOXIDE



SESAME



MOLLUSCS



MUSTARD



TREE NUTS



EGG



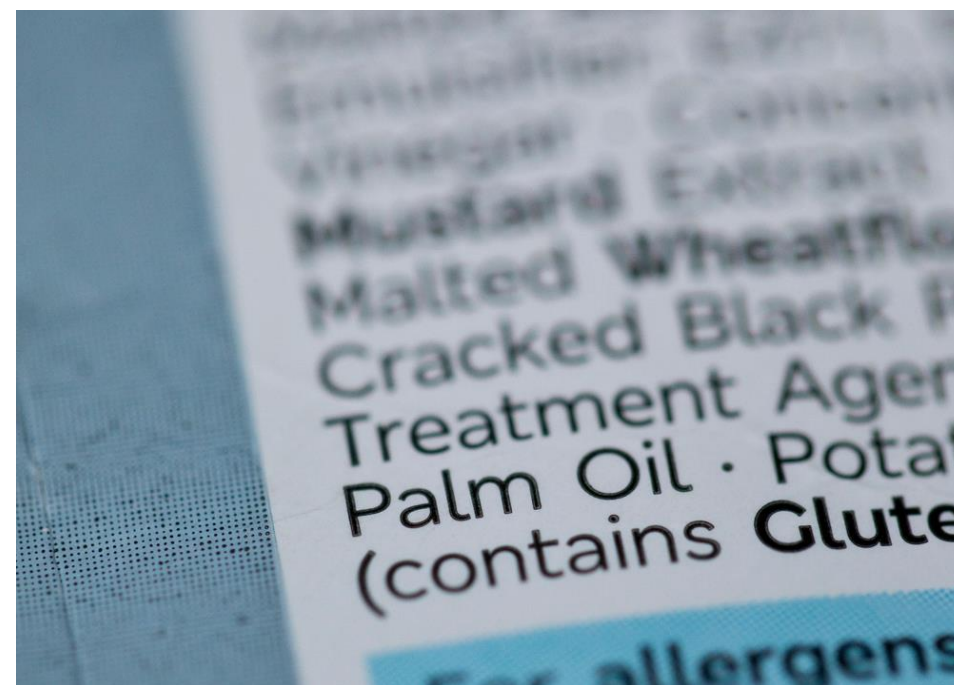
FISH



SOYBEANS



PEANUTS



Allergen labelling law

- The government introduced legislation mandating full ingredient labelling for food prepared for direct sale in 2021.
- The Law is known as Natasha's Law, after Natasha Ednan-Laperouse who died after suffering an allergic reaction to a baguette.
- The legislation requires foods that are prepared for direct sale to carry a full list of ingredients.
- Applies for prepacked foods sold in schools.



[Natasha's Law, Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natasha-s-law)
[Allergy in schools FAQ](#)

Managing allergens in the classroom



20% of severe allergic reactions to food occur while pupils are in school

[Anaphylaxis UK](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk)

Why are good food hygiene and safety practices in school important?

To prevent adverse reactions to food (food poisoning and allergic/intolerant reactions) – pupils, parents and staff.

Teacher's own indemnity.

As part of 'due diligence'.

Greater emphasis on healthy eating and practical cookery in the curriculum.

To ensure that pupils are **safe** in school ([Ofsted](#)), feel **safe** and secure ([Estyn](#)), and that school facilities are **safe** and secure for all ([Education Scotland How good is our school?](#)). In Northern Ireland effective practice in health wellbeing and keeping safe is demonstrated when the provision reflects the importance afforded to keeping **safe** and healthy lifestyles and the priority given to the wellbeing of all. ([etini](#)).

Food safety policies and risk assessments – why are these necessary?

Whilst carrying out a risk assessment for food activities is not a requirement in all countries of the UK, it is strongly advised.

Risk assessments help to minimise the risks in practical work and can focus attention on what the hazards might be and how they can be prevented or reduced.

In addition, poor hygiene and safety (including poor allergen management) would be considered/noticed in an education inspection and drawn to the school's attention. Food safety policies and risk assessments would help to ensure effective procedures are in place.

Risk assessments could be for recipes, lessons and equipment.



As well as ensuring pupil safety in the classroom, the role of a teacher working with food also includes the safe storage and handling of all ingredients including those that pupils bring with them from home.

Generic risk assessments

These are usually available through Local Authorities, but it is **essential** that schools adapt these to their own setting and account for any specific hazards.

Example risk assessments for food work in schools along with other support for good food hygiene and safety practices is available on www.foodafactoflife.org.uk

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, generic risk assessments are also available from CLEAPSS.
In Scotland, they are available from SSERC.

Example risk assessment – food room

Example risk Food hygiene and safety policies and risk assessments

According to the Health and Safety Executive, "Health and safety in a school is about taking a sensible and proportionate approach to ensure that the premises provide a healthy and safe place for all who use them, including the school workforce, visitors and pupils."

Schools, as employers, have a legal duty to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments in accordance with Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 for their buildings and activities.

In addition, a school must demonstrate *due diligence*, i.e. do everything within its power to safeguard the health of pupils, staff and visitors.

Writing, implementing and monitoring food hygiene and safety policies, such as the safe use and storage of allergenic ingredients, and risk assessments form part of the due diligence process.

Risk assessments
In order to minimise the risks involved in food and nutrition lessons and activities at school, it is essential that risk assessments are undertaken for recipes/activities, processes/procedures and specialist equipment. Risk assessments are formal activities and should follow five stages. They should be completed by a 'competent' member of staff and reviewed and updated regularly.

The five stages of risk assessment are:

1. look for the hazards;
2. decide who might be harmed and how;
3. evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done;
4. record your findings;
5. review your assessment and revise it if necessary.

Evaluating the risks
A risk matrix can be used to evaluate the likelihood that a hazard may cause harm and the severity of the consequences.

	Likelihood	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Highly unlikely
Fatality	High	High	High	Medium	Medium
Major injuries	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low
Minor injuries	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Negligible injuries	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low

© Food – a fact of life 2015

www.foodafactoflife.org.uk

www.foodafactoflife.org.uk Good food hygiene and safety practices

Food – a fact of life risk assessments

Guidance and resources to support the implementation and management of good food hygiene and safety practices in the primary classroom.

- [Tasting guide](#)
- [Setting up a cooking session](#)
- [Ingredient check letter](#)
- [Practical activity/recipe risk assessment](#)
- [Risk assessment template](#)

If you work in a primary setting, there is a [recording](#) of a webinar with Maria from CLEAPSS that you might find useful.

Food – a fact of life risk assessments

Guidance and resources to support the implementation and management of good food hygiene and safety practices in the secondary classroom.

- [A guide to food hygiene and safety policies and risk assessments](#)
- [Good food hygiene and safety practices](#) – a short guide
- [Example food and nutrition letter](#)
- Example risk assessments:
 - [Organising and managing a safe food room](#)
 - [Preparation, cooking and storage](#)
 - [Food poisoning](#)
 - [Food sampling and tasting](#)
 - [Practical activity/recipe](#)
 - [Risk assessment template](#), [Risk assessment \(recipe\) template](#)

Record keeping

Record keeping – part of due diligence

It is important to keep a food hygiene and safety file in the practical classroom with the following up-to-date documents:

- daily fridge/freezer temperature record sheets;
- risk assessments;
- cleaning schedules;
- COSHH record sheets (where appropriate);
- **a list of pupil's special dietary requirements, especially allergies;**
- food hygiene and safety training certificates;
- departmental food policies/letters to parents, e.g. provision of ingredients/storage of ingredients/food at school.

Food and nutrition letter (example)

Date: _____

Dear parent/coar

Re: Food and nutrition education

During food and nutrition lessons at <school name>, your child will be learning about healthy eating, cooking and where food comes from.

He/she will make a number of recipes/dishes throughout the year and it is essential that we ensure that the food your child makes is as safe to eat as possible. An important aspect of food safety is temperature control and therefore it will be necessary that high risk ingredients (such as meat, fish and dairy products plus opened bottles, jars or tubes) are placed in the fridge in the food room before the start of the school day. **High risk ingredients not placed in the fridge will not be used.** Low risk ingredients (such as flour, sugar, dried fruit, canned food, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and eggs) should also be stored in the food room until needed. Any finished dishes will be stored in the fridge, or in the food room, and should be collected at the end of the school day. Please note that your child will not be allowed to take dishes away to eat for lunch. Any dishes, spare ingredients or containers not collected after two days will be recycled or disposed.

Personal hygiene is also an important consideration and therefore your child must not wear jewellery, watches or nail varnish, they must tie their hair back and must wear a clean apron. In addition, your child will be actively discouraged from eating during a practical lesson unless it is to taste dishes made.

Finally, food lessons will involve your child using and tasting a number of ingredients. It is essential for me to be aware of any allergies or intolerances he/she may have. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could complete the reply slip below so that I can keep a record for future reference.

I appreciate your assistance with the above and look forward to teaching your son/daughter and hope to enthuse him/her about good food and healthier eating.

Yours faithfully

XXXXX
FOOD TEACHER

Ingredient check slip

My child: _____

Date: _____

☐ Does not have food allergies/ intolerances or religious/cultural reasons for not handling or eating certain food.

Or

☐ Does have food allergies/ intolerances or religious/cultural reasons for not handling or eating certain food. (Add details to the table below.)

My child should not handle or eat these food(s):	Complete this column ONLY in the case of severe allergy.
	My child has a severe allergy and the following food(s) must not be used.

☐ I agree to my child wearing a plaster or plastic gloves to enable them to take part in food lessons if they have a cut or skin condition on their hands on the day of the food lesson.

Parent/coar name (PRINTED): _____

Parent/coar signature: _____

Example food and nutrition letter

Record keeping – allergies and intolerances

Pupil information

- Gathered by administration staff and added to pupil records/SIMS.
- Gathered by departmental staff via a letter/ingredient check slip;
 - recorded on seating plan;
 - recorded on exercise books/booklets.
- Updated at the beginning of each academic year or change of rotation.

What does the school/you need to know?

- Is it an allergy or intolerance?
- If an allergy, is it air-borne, contact or ingested?
- What if any, immediate action is needed if there is an adverse reaction/emergency?

This is an example of a 'Food and nutrition letter' from Food a fact of life. It is addressed to 'Dear parent/carer' and is dated. The letter is titled 'Re: Food and nutrition education'. It explains that during food and nutrition lessons, the child will be learning about healthy eating, cooking, and where food comes from. It states that the teacher will make a number of recipes/dishes throughout the year and it is essential that the food is safe to eat as possible. It lists high risk ingredients (meat, fish, dairy, opened bottles, jars or tubes) that are placed in the fridge in the food room before the start of the school day. It also lists low risk ingredients (flour, sugar, dried fruit, canned food, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and eggs) that should also be stored in the food room until needed. It notes that any finished dishes will be stored in the fridge, or in the food room, and should be collected at the end of the school day. It asks the parent/carer to note that their child will not be allowed to take dishes away to eat for lunch. It also mentions that any dishes, spare ingredients or containers not collected after two days will be recycled or disposed. It then discusses personal hygiene, stating that the child must not wear jewellery, watches or nail varnish, must tie their hair back and must wear a clean apron. It also mentions that the child will be actively discouraged from eating during a practical lesson unless it is to taste dishes made. Finally, it states that food lessons will involve the child using and tasting a number of ingredients, and it is essential for the parent/carer to be aware of any allergies or intolerances the child may have. It asks the parent/carer to complete the reply slip below so that the teacher can keep a record for future reference. It then says 'I appreciate your assistance with the above and look forward to teaching your son/daughter and hope to enthuse him/her about good food and healthier eating.' and is signed 'Yours faithfully' followed by 'XXXXX FOOD TEACHER'. At the bottom, it says '© Food – a fact of life 2019' and 'www.foodafactoflife.org.uk'.

To ban or not to ban ingredients?

DFE guidance states that allergy is classed as a medical condition and schools have a duty to support pupils at their school with medical diets and should make reasonable adjustments so children can participate fully and safely – and remove barriers to participating in school life.



What is the answer?

A culture of allergy awareness and an effective whole school management approach to allergens – this includes food and nutrition lessons.

Simply banning ingredients is not a risk-free solution. Allergy UK

Allergy School – from the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation



Empower

Greater understanding will allow schools, teachers and pupils to feel more confident around food allergies.



Include

All children should feel safe at school and be able to participate fully.



Protect

More awareness will help to keep children with food allergies safe.

[The Allergy School](#)

Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education in secondary schools

Section C Good food hygiene and safety practices

Staff and learners take measures to prevent cross-contamination of allergens and the risk of allergic reaction.

- Establish procedures to ensure that learner and staff **food allergies** and **intolerances** are known, recorded and reviewed regularly.
- Store food containing **allergenic ingredients** separately.
- Make sure equipment is used, cleaned and stored separately to prevent cross-contamination of **allergens**.
- Make sure that staff and learners are aware of the main 14 **allergenic ingredients** in recipes, food for tasting and investigations.

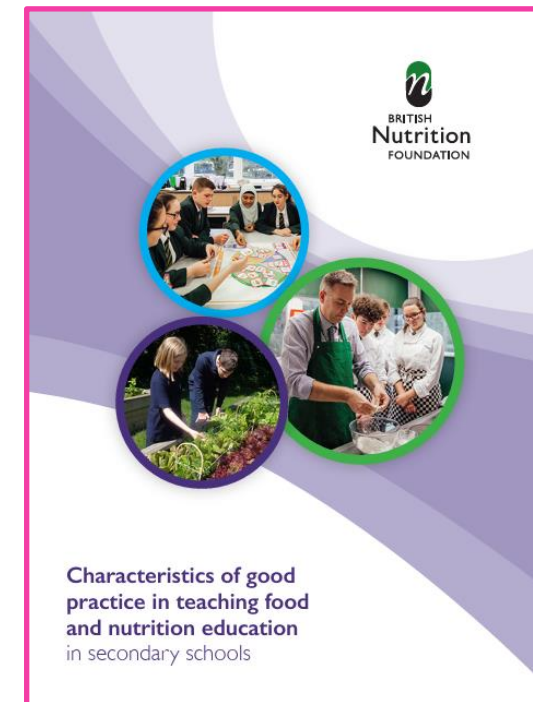


Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education in secondary schools

Section C Good food hygiene and safety practices

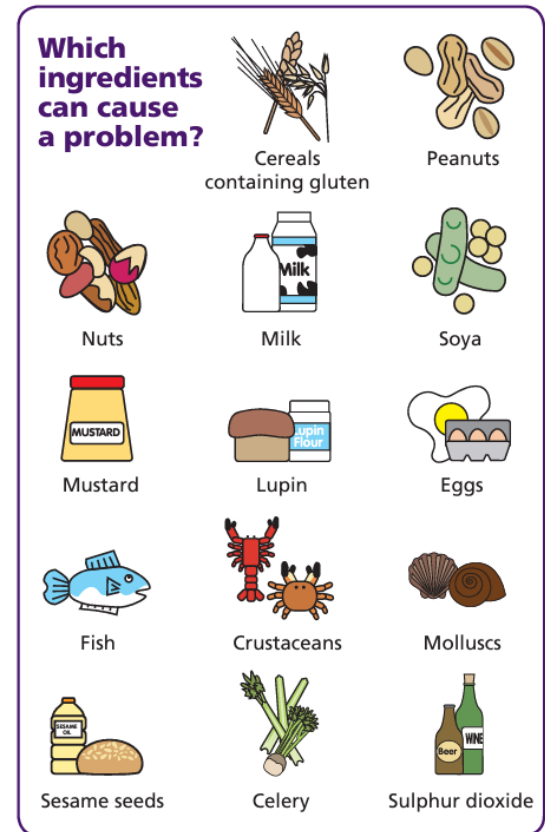
Staff and learners follow safe and hygienic procedures for tasting and testing.

- Ensure that staff and learners are aware of **allergenic ingredients** in food provided for tasting activities or investigations (as identified on the ingredient check letter completed by parents/carers).
- Establish clear guidelines for hygiene standards when sampling food and drink, e.g. no 'double dipping' or licking fingers.



Cross contamination – allergenic ingredients

- Allergenic ingredients can cause severe adverse reactions to those people who are sensitive to the ingredients.
- Allergic reactions can be caused by cross contamination of ingredients or food that contains an allergen.
- Food can be contaminated due to poor cleaning of utensils or cross-contact during preparation.
- Separate utensils, and areas, should be used when preparing and cooking foods containing allergens.
- All food should be clearly labelled with allergen information.



[Allergy Safe Food Lessons – Checklist for Schools - Benedict Blythe Foundation](#)

Successful gluten free cooking in schools webinar [recording](#) and [presentation](#)

[FSA Think Allergy](#)

[FSA allergen information for businesses](#)



Allergen menu
planner

www.foodafactoflife.org.uk © Food – a fact of life 2025

Labels for finished dishes

Pre-print name labels for dishes made— this helps manage the food stored in your fridges but also gives pupils and parents important storage, cooking and allergen information.

The information on the label could include:

- Name, date and class/year group
- Cooking and storage instructions
- Allergens



Name:

Date:

Form:

Quick Pizza: Store in a refrigerator and consume within 48 hours. To cook, oven bake (200° C, gas mark 6) for 20-25 minutes until the base is cooked. To reheat, place on a baking tray, cover with foil and bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes until piping hot.

Allergens: wheat, butter, milk, cheese

Examples of food labels can be found [here](https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk):

9. True or false? It is common for children to grow out of food allergies early in childhood.

True
False

10. Which of these best describes coeliac disease?

An autoimmune disease causing a reaction to gluten
An autoimmune disease causing a reaction to wheat
Allergy to gluten
Allergy to wheat

11. Roughly how many people are affected by Coeliac disease in the UK?

1 in 10
1 in 100
1 in 500
1 in 1000

12. True or false? Rice and potatoes contain gluten.

True
False

13. Which of these causes lactose intolerance?

An allergy to lactose
An allergy to dairy
A lack of the enzyme lactase which breaks down lactose
An autoimmune disease which reacts to lactose

14. In the UK, Ireland and northern Europe, what percentage of people are affected by lactose intolerance?

1%
5%
10%
15%

15. True or false? People with lactose intolerance can often tolerate some dairy products.

True
False



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Primary and secondary Knowledge organisers!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Food labelling

- Food labels provide information, which helps people to know when to eat food, and how to store it safely.
- Nutrition and allergy information on food labels help to make informed food and drink choices.

Food labelling
Information on the labels of pre-packed food and drink products can be legally required or just for consumer information.
Legally required information:

- country of origin and place of provenance;
- date mark;
- list of ingredients (including additives and allergens);
- name and address of the manufacturer, packer or seller;
- name of food or drink;
- nutrition information;
- storage and preparation instructions;
- weight or volume.

Consumer information:

- front-of-pack nutrition label;
- price;
- serving suggestions/image.

Date marks/shelf life
"Use by" dates relate to the safety of the food and "best before" dates relate to quality. Eating foods after their "use by" date could lead to food poisoning.















USE BY:
25/08/20
KEEP REFRIGERATED

BEST BEFORE:
25/08/21
STORE IN A COOL DRY PLACE

Baby leaf salad
Keep refrigerated. Once opened consume within 24 hours and by the "use by" date shown.

Allergen labelling
There are 14 ingredients (allergens) that are the main reason for adverse reactions to food. They must be labelled on pre-packaged food and menus so that consumers can make safe choices.
From summer 2021 new legislation will tighten the rules requiring food that is prepared for direct sale, e.g. in a coffee shop, to carry a full list of ingredients.

The 14 allergens are:

Ingredients
It is a legal requirement to include an ingredients list on packaged or pre-prepared foods. The ingredients must appear in descending order and with the allergens identified in bold, highlighted, underlined or in italics.

INGREDIENTS
Water, Carrots, Onions, Red Lentils (4.5%), Potatoes, Cauliflower, Leeds, Peas, Cornflour, Wheat flour, Cream (milk), Yeast Extract, Concentrated Tomato Paste, Garlic, Sugar, Celery Seed, Sunflower Oil, Herb and Spice, White Pepper, Parsley

ALLERGY ADVICE
For allergens, see ingredients in bold

Nutrition Information
Nutrition information can help consumers make healthier choices. Back-of-pack nutrition information is legally required.

Key terms
Allergen: An ingredient that may cause an adverse reaction to food.
Back-of-pack labelling: Is legally required and can help consumers make healthier choices.
Front-of-pack labelling: Is voluntary but must provide certain information and can use red, amber and green colour coding.
Use-by-date: Relates to the safety of the food. Food must be eaten by this date.
Best-before-date: Relates to the quality of the food. Food may still be eaten beyond this date.

Front-of-pack labelling
Front of pack nutrition information is voluntary. If a food business chooses to provide this, only the following information may be provided:

- energy only;
- energy along with fat, saturates, sugar and salt.

Red, amber and green colours, if used, show at a glance whether a food is high, medium or low for fat, saturates, sugars or salt. The colour coding can be used to compare two products.

Task
Produce a food label for a dish you have made. Ensure that the label includes the information required by law that relates to food hygiene and safety, i.e. a date mark, ingredient list (with allergens identified) and storage instructions.

PER PACK

Energy	200kJ	48kcal	100%
Fat	15.0g	6.4g	30%
Saturates	6.4g	1.0g	10%
Sugars	15.0g	1.0g	30%

Typical Energy values per 100g: 554kJ/132kcal

Consumer information
Information can help consumers make informed choices, including:

- advertising and marketing;
- media;
- online blogforums;
- packaging, nutrition and health claims;
- point of purchase information;
- product placement;
- recipe ideas.

Who, what, when and where
The time of day, location and who is eating can impact food choice:

- eating alone, with family or friends;
- celebration;
- day of the week;
- location, e.g. at home, school or work, at a restaurant, on the go;
- meal or snack;
- occasion and time of day.

Personal preferences
A number of factors can influence personal preferences, including:

- colour, size and shape of crockery and cutlery used;
- portion size;
- serving style;
- taste, aroma, texture, appearance, shape and colour of food.

Social and economic considerations
The cost of food, money available and social aspects will influence people's food choices:

- cost of food;
- greater food availability;
- income;
- labour saving equipment;
- lack of cooking skills;
- long hours at work;
- wide range of convenience foods.

Allergy and intolerance
There are 14 ingredients (allergens) that are the main reasons for adverse reactions to food. People who are allergic, or intolerant, to these ingredients should take care to avoid eating them. The 14 allergens are:

Celery (and celeriac)	Milk
Cereals containing gluten	Molluscs
Crustaceans	Mustard
Eggs	Nuts
Fish	Peanuts
Lupin	Sesame
	Soybeans
	Sulphur dioxide

Food provenance
Food provenance is about where food is grown, caught or reared, and how it was produced. Food certification and assurance schemes guarantee defined standards of food safety or animal welfare. There are many in the UK, including:

- Red Tractor
- British Lion
- Marine Stewardship Council

Health and wellbeing
People may choose their food based on their own or their family's health and wellbeing:

- age and gender;
- allergy and intolerance;
- body image;
- health status;
- mental health;
- physical activity.

Food certification and assurance schemes: Defined standards of food safety, quality or animal welfare.

Food provenance: Where food is grown, caught or reared, and how it was produced.

Marketing: Promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising.

Religion: A particular system of faith and worship.







Seasonal food: Food grown at a particular time of year.

Seasonality: The times of year when a given type food is at its peak, either in terms of harvest or its flavour.

Task
Research one consideration when planning what to cook. Prepare a PPT presentation to share with the class next lesson.

To find out more, go to: <https://bit.ly/3dNUMBf>

Equipment

Equipment	Name
	Chopping board
	Fork
	Measuring jug
	Mixing bowl
	Mixing spoon
	Vegetable knife

Read our [blog](#) to find out more about the FFL knowledge organisers – including versions in Welsh!

Allergy Checklist for Schools

The Food Teachers Centre have worked with the Benedict Blythe Foundation to develop a checklist for schools.

Headteachers and school governors have a legal duty to make accommodation for students with medical conditions including allergies. There is a responsibility to both keep a child with allergies safe, but also to allow them equitable access to the school curriculum.



Allergy Safe Food Lessons – Checklist for Schools

Headteachers and school governors have a legal duty to make accommodation for students with medical conditions including allergies. There is a responsibility to both keep a child with allergies safe, but also to allow them equitable access to the school curriculum.

5-8% of children in the UK have a food allergy, that's 1 to 2 in every class of 30. Teaching food and nutrition to students with allergies is a great responsibility. They face the challenge of planning ingredients, budgets, use of equipment and cross contamination and must have the support to do so safely. Increasingly non-specialist staff members are thrust into teaching food and find themselves solely responsible for writing risk assessments, liaising with families and managing multiple dietary requirements preparing for lessons and monitoring systems.

No room for error – understanding food allergy

Allergic reactions are caused by the immune system responding to a food it mistakenly sees as harmful and they can be life-threatening. Sometimes, even a trace amount of their allergen will make someone very unwell. People with food allergies must completely avoid eating, and in some cases touching, the food to which they are allergic. Therefore, education settings must have rigorous procedures in place to reduce risk for students with allergies during food lessons. These procedures should cover the safe storage, preparation, and cooking of food, including avoiding cross-contamination and the safe consumption of food.

The importance of food lesson in schools

Cooking and nutrition are compulsory in state-maintained schools for students in Key Stage 1-3 and are taught as part of the Design and Technology curriculum. There are GCSE exam courses in cooking and food related areas, for example Food Preparation and Nutrition, Hospitality and Catering. While understanding food and nutrition is important for all young people, students with food allergies have a great deal to gain from understanding ingredients, food labelling and cooking from scratch, to support them as they grow older. Food lessons and activities involving food should be planned and risk-assessed with students with allergies in mind. These students should not be excluded, and teachers should be given adequate training and support to ensure all students can access food lessons safely.

How our checklist can support your school

The checklist overleaf outlines good practice that should be implemented by senior leaders where a setting teaches food and/or nutrition. You can use the checklist to identify how many of the measures you already have in place, and where more work needs to be done to create safety for allergy sufferers in the delivery of food lessons, as well as proper support of your teachers and school staff who deliver this crucial part of the curriculum.



Co-created by The Allergy Team on behalf of Benedict Blythe Foundation alongside Food Teacher Centre with input from CLEAPPs



Checklist for allergy safety in school food lessons

The school endeavours to make it possible for every child with allergies to take part in food activities and lessons, unless it is impossible to do so safely or parents and clinicians advise against it.

STAFF TRAINING AND SCHOOL POLICY

- ☐ Training is in place for all staff teaching food lessons with students that covers: food safety and hygiene, allergy awareness and risk reduction, reading and understanding food labels, and guidance to avoid cross contamination. See Food Teaching guidance.
- ☐ Up to date and renewable first aid training is provided to anyone leading food lessons, including how to recognise and treat allergic reactions and how to use an adrenaline autoinjector pen (AAI) if you suspect anaphylaxis.
- ☐ There is a school Allergy and Anaphylaxis policy which sets out clear roles and responsibilities for allergy management, training and risk reduction, and this has been communicated to anyone with a role in food teaching.

LESSON PLANNING AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

- ☐ Food teaching staff are provided with up-to-date information about students' dietary requirements and medical conditions including copies of Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are available.
- ☐ Food teaching staff are provided with SLT support to chase up parents who are not forthcoming with medical information relating to allergies.
- ☐ A designated second staff member or school nurse is identified to support solo or inexperienced food teachers with lesson planning and writing risk assessments.
- ☐ Communication is initiated with parents/ carers of students with allergies about suitability of proposed dishes and how to mitigate risk of a pupil's allergens are being used in class.
- ☐ Food teaching staff are given additional time to develop safe menus and source ingredients from trusted sources, including input from catering teams where appropriate.
- ☐ Budget is made available for subsidising allergen-free alternatives, so safe ingredients can be supplied (eg dairy free spread for students with milk allergy). In some instances where a pupil is highly sensitive, this may mean providing this alternative for all students as well as deep-cleaned equipment.
- ☐ Allergy awareness is brought into the class, for example baking with egg substitute as a learning opportunity.

Allergy Safe Food Lessons – Checklist for Schools - Benedict Blythe Foundation

Other sources of information and support

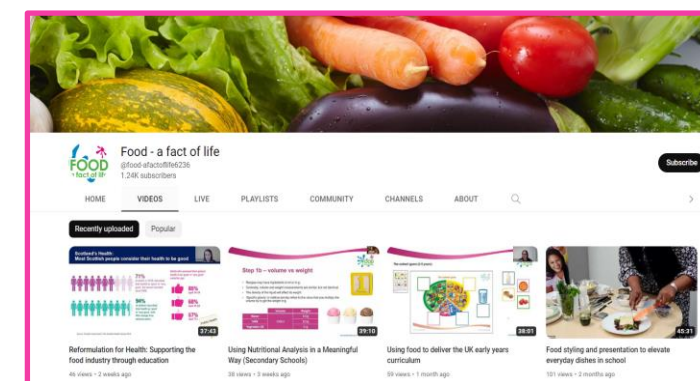
- [Allergy UK](#)
- [Anaphylaxis Campaign](#)
- [British Nutrition Foundation](#) – food labelling
- [CLEAPSS](#)
- [DfE Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)
- [Food Standards Agency](#) – allergens
- [Food Standards Agency](#) – free allergy training
- [Food Standards Scotland](#)
- [Food Standards Scotland education resources for S1-S3](#) – Allergen Action!
- [Food teaching in schools: A framework of knowledge and skills](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive – classroom checklist](#)
- [Health and Safety Executive Scotland](#)
- [Managing safety in schools and colleges - ROSPA](#)
- [NHS](#) – allergies
- [SSERC](#)
- [CLEAPSS](#)
- Food teaching in [primary](#) and [secondary](#) schools: A framework of knowledge and skills (BNF/DfE/PHE)

More training...

FREE online modular courses:

- Functional properties of food
- Sensory science
- Food spoilage, hygiene and safety
- Characteristics of teaching food and nutrition education- primary, secondary and pupils with additional needs

Successful gluten free cooking in schools
webinar [recording](#) and [presentation](#)



[FFL webinar recordings](#)

To find out more and to book, go to
<https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/training/>



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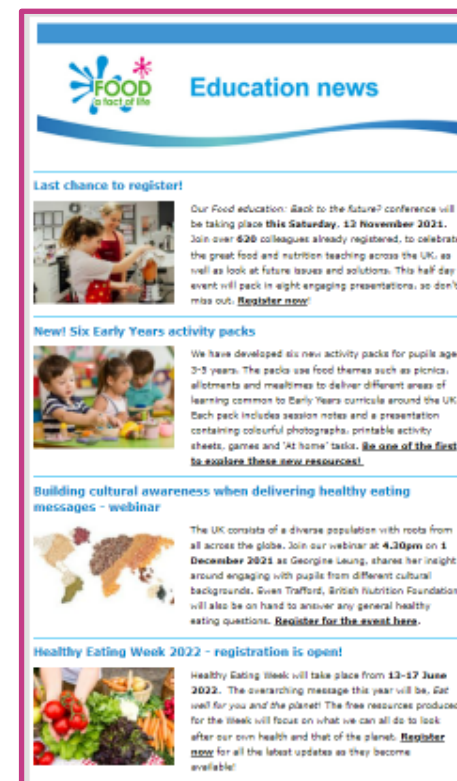
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Adverse reactions to food and the management of allergens in the classroom



For further information, go to:
www.foodafactoflife.org.uk

education@nutrition.org.uk