

What you need to know about

# Gluten & Other Allergens in Healthcare

YOUR PRACTICAL GUIDE



Brought to you by **nutripro**



# Managing food allergens

## BEST PRACTICE

**We know managing gluten and other food allergens is increasingly dominating the agenda in foodservice and poses a significant challenge in a busy kitchen.**

This is especially the case in healthcare where additional complexities exist with service, and where duty of care is imperative.

This guide will provide practical strategies and the knowledge needed to implement best practice in your healthcare organisation and references:

- Coeliac Australia's Gluten Free Standard for Food Service Providers<sup>®</sup>, and
- Statewide Foodservice's Food Allergen Management in Foodservice - A Best Practice Guideline (see page 26 for all resource links)

The key areas of practice are based on four key principles:

1. NOTIFICATION

2. SOURCING

3. SEPARATION

4. SERVICE

The hints and tips for best practice outlined in this guide will support you in the provision of meals to meet the dietary needs of those in your care.

This information can be applied to gluten or any of the 10 declarable allergens listed in the Food Standards Code as described on page 5.

Patients and residents who have their dietary needs well catered for will have greater trust in, and satisfaction with their healthcare facility.

## GOOD TO KNOW



We know internal processes vary from facility to facility. As such, not all allergen management processes outlined in this booklet will be relevant to you. By applying the guidance given here to your relevant processes, and utilising the additional resources provided on page 26, you can feel more confident about the allergen management of those in your care.



# Brought to you by

## NESTLÉ PROFESSIONAL

As your trusted partner in the provision of quality ingredients, we know without good supporting processes, it can be a challenge to deliver allergen free menus. Our partnership with Coeliac Australia and the Institute of Hospitality in Healthcare, allows us to support you in taking the steps necessary to transform allergen free ingredients into allergen free meals delivered to the right person at the right time.

Karen Kingham



## COELIAC AUSTRALIA

Coeliac Australia is the peak body for people living with coeliac disease and raises awareness of coeliac disease and the gluten free diet within the medical profession, the food and hospitality industry and with the general public. Coeliac Australia developed the Gluten Free Standard for Food Service Providers® in 2015 to establish best practice for gluten free food preparation, because eating outside the home remains the biggest challenge faced by gluten free consumers today.

Cathy Di Bella



## INSTITUTE OF HOSPITALITY IN HEALTH CARE (IHHC)

The IHHC is a non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the professionalism and quality of support services in the Health and Aged Care Industry through the sharing of expertise. The IHHC offers its expertise to a variety of organisations, including government and statutory departments seeking advice on issues relating to all areas of support services. The IHHC is also directly involved in formulating guidelines and recommendations affecting the Industry to achieve our mission of member support.

John Boland



# The importance of an allergen free diet

Now more than ever there is a greater need for robust processes in allergen management. Providing allergen free options that can be trusted means less stress, greater satisfaction, better nutrition and better health for those who need them. Did you know:



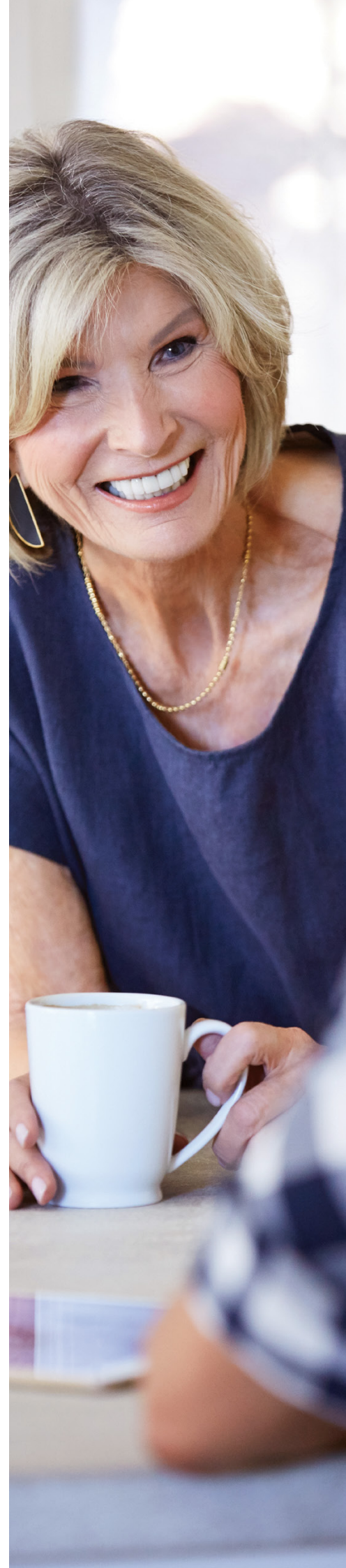
Hospital admissions for life threatening reactions to food have increased 4-fold in the past 14 years<sup>1</sup>.



Healthcare food service providers report that gluten free is their greatest single special diet request and that staff training is the biggest obstacle to quality gluten free meals for patients and residents<sup>2</sup>.



Food avoidance is not just the practice of younger Australians. One in four older Australians (aged 70 years and over) are also avoiding one or more types of food<sup>3</sup>.



# Being allergen aware

**A food allergy is an immune system response to a food protein that the body mistakenly believes is harmful. The reaction by the body to a food allergen can be potentially life threatening.**

Most food allergies in Australia and New Zealand are caused by peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish, shellfish, soy, lupin and cereals containing gluten. Food Standards Australian New Zealand (FSANZ) Food Standard Code requires these foods to be declared on labels whenever they are present as ingredients or as part of food additives or processing aids. See resources on page 26 for the link to FSANZ's free poster.

## **Know the ten allergens that must be declared on food labels**



TREE NUTS



PEANUTS



MILK



LUPIN



EGGS



FISH



SOY



SESAME



CRUSTACEAN



CEREALS CONTAINING GLUTEN  
AND THEIR PRODUCTS

An allergen is the name given to the substance that a person's immune system thinks is harmful. Practically all foods have the ability to cause an allergic reaction, however, in Australia and New Zealand there are ten foods causing around 90% of all food-based allergic reactions (see below). By law, manufacturers must declare all of these allergens and their products on a food label where they exist in the food.

The law also requires that anyone serving food must be able to provide accurate information about the allergens contained in the food they are serving.

There is currently no cure for food allergies and the only successful way to manage a food allergy and prevent the reactions they cause, is by avoiding the allergen.

## **SYMPTOMS OF A FOOD ALLERGY**

Food allergy reactions can happen very quickly. Signs and symptoms will vary from person to person and can range from mild to life threatening.

### **Mild to moderate reactions include:**

- Swelling of the face, lips or eyes
- Hives or welts on the skin
- Tummy pain or vomiting

### **Severe reactions include:**

- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the tongue and/or throat
- Difficulty talking
- Wheeze or cough
- Dizziness or collapse

## **GOOD TO KNOW**



### **Best practice with foods that contain allergens:**

- Give accurate information about the allergens in food you serve on the menu when asked
- Correctly identify those who need allergen free meals
- Ensure when notified that those with allergies and intolerances are NOT given foods that will make them unwell

# What is gluten?

Gluten is the name for the protein found in the grains wheat, rye, oats and barley and any foods made from them.



WHEAT



RYE



OATS



BARLEY

## GLUTEN FREE MENUS - YOUR DUTY OF CARE

Declaring any food gluten free comes with responsibilities to those you are serving.

### Gluten free food must not contain:

- Any detectable gluten; or
- Oats or oat products; or
- Cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, oats, barley) that have been malted, or products of such cereals

### Low gluten food:

- Contains less than 20mg gluten per 100g of the food
- Is NOT suitable for people with coeliac disease

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Contact Coeliac Australia for their resource pack, which includes the latest version of the Ingredient List Booklet. This booklet lists over 800 foods and can help identify gluten-containing ingredients on your menu.

1300 458 836

[info@coeliac.org.au](mailto:info@coeliac.org.au)

[www.coeliac.org.au](http://www.coeliac.org.au)

## GOOD TO KNOW



Our food regulator Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ):

- Requires food served as gluten free to contain no detectable gluten
- Does NOT allow menus to claim Gluten Friendly, 99% Gluten Free or Coeliac Friendly
- Does NOT allow the use of disclaimers such as 'may contain traces of gluten' on gluten free products



# Why gluten free?

Confusion often exists about gluten free requests. Should it be taken seriously or is it just a trend? Patients and residents will ask for gluten free meals for three main reasons.

## 1 COELIAC DISEASE

Coeliac disease affects around 1 in 70 Australians<sup>4</sup> and a strict lifelong gluten free diet is their only medical treatment.



Coeliac disease is not an allergy. Instead, it is an autoimmune illness triggered by eating gluten which causes damage to the small intestine.



For some, eating gluten results in severe symptoms while others suffer little or no obvious effects.

Symptoms generally come on within one to two hours after gluten is eaten and may include:

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhoea, constipation, wind, cramping, bloating,
- Tummy pain
- Tiredness or general weakness
- Bone and joint pains
- Recurrent mouth ulcers

There are significant long-term health problems from ongoing gluten ingestion including;

- some types of cancers
- liver disease
- osteoporosis
- vitamin and mineral deficiencies, including iron and vitamin D
- failure to thrive or delayed puberty in children

**ALL people with coeliac disease are at risk of these serious conditions with ongoing exposure to gluten regardless of the presence of symptoms. A strict lifelong gluten free diet is the only medical treatment for coeliac disease.**

## 2 OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The gluten free diet can be helpful in reducing symptoms in other medical conditions, for example the intolerance to wheat that can arise from irritable bowel syndrome. A gluten free diet can sometimes help however, it is always best for these conditions to be managed with the help of a GP or dietitian.

## 3 DIETARY CHOICE

Some people choose a gluten free diet as a lifestyle choice. They believe it will improve their health, help them lose weight or even boost their sports performance. Whilst these people are not following a gluten free diet for medical reasons it is your obligation to meet this dietary request.

### GOOD TO KNOW



- Always treat a gluten free request seriously
- Never make a judgement on why a person makes a gluten free request
- Always follow your workplace's allergen procedures when serving gluten free foods or beverages

# The Team

As a member of The Team you have a duty of care to play your part in ensuring the special dietary needs of those you care for are met.



## NURSING

- Check with patient/resident/family/ GP about food allergies/intolerances
- Confirm that the dietary request is not a personal preference
- Document all food allergies in the medical record, care plan or bed chart
- Update bed board/dietary requirements form with special diet needs
- Inform kitchen immediately



## FOOD SERVICE MANAGERS

- Additional check with patient/resident/family to clarify needs and preferences
- Plan menus and recipes according to allergy/gluten free needs
- Implement and enforce the use of standard recipes that include allergen identification and ingredients of concern
- Put in place protocols for ingredient substitution and ensure they are followed
- Ensure processes are in place to support allergen management via the Food Safety Plan
- Ensure all foodservice staff are trained in allergen management processes in the kitchen and for delivery of meals and mid-meals (updated annually)



## LIFESTYLE AND ACTIVITY STAFF

- Ensure they understand the local procedures for delivery of special diets



## ADMINISTRATION

- Update relevant documentation on food allergy/intolerance status
- Print off a different coloured 'allergy' wristband for those in hospital
- Use "adverse reaction stickers" for documentation



## DIETETIC ASSISTANTS & MENU MONITORS

- Ensure menu is communicated effectively between the patient or resident and the kitchen via menu management system



## COOKS & CHEFS

- Prepare special diets correctly
- Follow standard recipes
- Avoid cross contamination by following Food Safety Plan and allergen free food preparation procedures



## FOOD SERVICE ASSISTANTS

- Ensure allergen free meals are plated correctly and delivered to the correct individual whether directly or on a delivery trolley where they are covered and placed on a dedicated shelf
- Identify allergen meal recipients correctly using standard facility procedures
- Always check with patient/resident/nurse/dietitian if unsure
- Do not leave allergen free meal where there is no patient or resident to receive it



KEY PRINCIPLE ONE

# Notification

Step one in the process of supplying  
an allergen free meal



You are trusted by patients  
to meet their special  
dietary needs



You have a duty of care  
when you are working with  
vulnerable people

## RESPONSIBILITY



COOKS &  
CHEFS



NURSING



ADMINISTRATION



DIETETIC  
ASSISTANTS &  
MENU MONITORS



FOOD SERVICE  
MANAGERS

## NOTIFICATION

# Admission

The first step in ensuring allergen free dietary needs are met.

## PROCESS

Details on special dietary needs such as food allergies and intolerances are taken. Clarify symptoms to distinguish these from a general food preference or dislike (where the situation is unclear seek further details from their GP)



Note details in patient chart, care plan or admission documents (including documents relevant to the pharmacy – e.g. Medication chart)

## GOOD TO KNOW



People trust those working in hospitals and aged care homes to look after their best interests.

As such, many are reluctant to question or check that their dietary needs have been properly attended to.

Those responsible for notification enable the visual cues for allergen free diets to be put in place. These cues help all team members meet necessary dietary needs and instil confidence in the patient or resident who needs them.

## RESPONSIBILITY



NURSING



ADMINISTRATION



## NOTIFICATION

# Meal ordering

Communicates the special dietary need.

## RESPONSIBILITY



NURSING



ADMINISTRATION

## PROCESS

Nursing/administration advise of special diet need to the kitchen via standard procedures (menu ordering system, meal list, phone call, dietary requirements form)



Communication of dietary status to the wider team by:

- Adverse reaction stickers in the medical record or on the care plan
- Different coloured record labels
- Different coloured patient wristbands
- Bed board notice
- Dietary requirements form
- Meal lists which may include photographs to assist with identification
- Verbally

## GOOD TO KNOW



Meeting dietary needs using good allergen management processes ensures:

- No one is made unwell or put at risk by the meals they are served
- Complaints are minimised
- Everyone's satisfaction is greater

## SCENARIO

Tom is admitted to hospital overnight for a routine procedure. The admitting nurse clarifies Tom's gluten free diet request by asking if he avoids wheat. Tom confirms this and assumes the nurse understands he also needs to avoid gluten in other foods. The nurse follows a wheat free diet for digestive issues so believes she understands Tom's request and orders him a wheat free diet.

Tom receives an unlabelled meal of soup, sandwiches and dessert from a food service assistant following his procedure who does not comment on the diet type she is delivering. The bread is gluten free, however, the soup contains barley and the dessert has oats in the crumble.

Tom reacts badly to such a large dose of gluten in his otherwise gluten free diet and needs to remain in hospital several more days while he recovers from gluten related symptoms.

## SOLUTION

**Annual training in allergen management for all staff involved in food handling and dietary communication is important. For nursing staff this would ensure a good understanding of how to correctly clarify a gluten free diet request. Implementing the practice of confirming special diets on delivery allows individuals to question meals that appear incorrect. A visual cue such as labelling of allergen free meals will also allow mistakes to be noted prior to meal consumption.**

## OUTCOME

**Staff trained in allergen management better understand dietary issues, minimising risk of confusion over dietary requests. The practice of confirming dietary needs at the time of meal delivery along with the labelling of all food items ensures the recipient is clear on the nature of the special diet they are receiving.**

NOTIFICATION

# Kitchen or diet office

Translates admission communications to ensure the right person gets the right diet.

**PROCESS**



**RESPONSIBILITY**



**NOTIFICATION TOP TIPS (SUMMARY)**

Everyone has a role to play in making sure the right meal is served:



NURSING



ADMINISTRATION

documents dietary needs in required locations



NURSING

confirms special diet need and documents this in the medical record or care plan and ensures visual cues are in place



COOKS & CHEFS



DIETETIC ASSISTANTS & MENU MONITORS



FOOD SERVICE ASSISTANTS



FOOD SERVICE MANAGERS

documents the dietary need correctly in the kitchen to ensure the correct meal is made

**WANT MORE INFORMATION?**

Check your work place Food Safety Plan for information

KEY PRINCIPLE TWO

# Sourcing

Sourcing allergen free ingredients is the cornerstone to producing a menu that is allergen free. Do you know your role?



## RESPONSIBILITY



FOOD SERVICE  
MANAGERS



COOKS  
& CHEFS



FOOD SERVICE  
ASSISTANTS

# Managing contracts

Managing contracts with trusted suppliers are vital to the provision of allergen free meals.



FOOD SERVICE MANAGERS



COOKS & CHEFS

## PROCESS

Use a supplier who can validate their gluten or allergen free claims



Ask your supplier to provide a current Product Information Form (PIF) which will detail product specifications and allergen status



Ensure food contracts specify no product substitutions without prior notification and approval



Avoid products containing precautionary or may contain statements because of potential cross contamination

## GOOD TO KNOW



- Check your PIFs are up to date. Manufacturers can change their ingredients or processing methods at any time
- Products in different sizes may be made in a different facility or contain different ingredients



## SOURCING

# Goods delivery

Confirming you get the ingredients you ordered.

## PROCESS

Check items delivered are the correct products – cross check brand and use by or best before date as per Food Safety Plan



Check the products ingredient and allergen claims with their current PIF



Note any variations to the goods in your communication log or the communication tool used at your site



Check packaging is not broken

## GOOD TO KNOW



If ever in doubt about a product:

- Speak to your supplier or dietitian
- Contact the manufacturer
- Leave it off your menu

## RESPONSIBILITY



FOOD SERVICE MANAGERS



COOKS & CHEFS



FOOD SERVICE ASSISTANTS

## SCENARIO

Ivan the chef of a medium sized aged care home has to replace his usual supplier of fresh potatoes. One of the products he orders is potato, pre-cut into chips for deep-frying. The chips are on the menu with grilled fish every Friday. Ivan knows fresh potato is gluten free so doesn't specifically ask about allergens or read the product specifications and PIF that arrive with the contract.

The first Saturday after delivery of potatoes by the new supplier a number of people on allergen free diets become unwell with symptoms related to allergen exposure, particularly gluten and egg..

An allergen breach is suspected and processes and menus are reviewed along with PIF's for all raw materials used on the allergen free menu the previous day.

When the PIF's are checked for the pre-cut chipped potatoes it was discovered they contain a cross contact or 'may contain' statement for wheat and egg. These potatoes are prepared on the same line as the battered wedges they supply to pubs and clubs and are not allergen free.

## SOLUTION

**Confirm allergen status of products with suppliers before entering into contracts. Check PIF and product specifications for allergens either as ingredients or as a cross contact for ALL food deliveries to the kitchen.**

## OUTCOME

**Assumptions are not made on the presence of allergens in food ingredients.**

# Planning gluten free menus

Gluten free recipes source their ingredients from naturally gluten free foods and those identified as gluten free.



## GREEN FOODS NATURALLY GLUTEN FREE

These are naturally gluten free and mostly unprocessed single ingredient foods

- Grains such as rice, corn (maize), buckwheat, millet, amaranth, sorghum, quinoa, teff and arrowroot
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Raw uncoated meat, chicken and fish
- Eggs
- Fresh milk, fresh unthickened cream and butter
- Cooking oils and fats
- Unprocessed legumes and nuts

If these foods are packaged or processed, check labels to ensure they are still gluten free  
Foods that include 'May Contain' statements are **not** suitable for a gluten free menu.



## AMBER FOODS CHECK PRODUCT INFORMATION

These are generally processed and packaged foods and have multiple ingredients. Because gluten can be found in unexpected places it is essential that every product is assessed to determine if it is gluten free. Check ingredient lists or the PIF to determine allergen status of the following foods\*:

- Dairy products such as yoghurt, custard and ice cream
- Processed meats such as small goods, sausages, marinated meats and meat substitutes
- Beverages like milk alternatives (soy, almond, rice etc), drinking chocolate, milk flavourings and cordial
- Stocks, sauces, gravies, seasonings and marinades
- Condiments such as salad dressings, vinegars, mustard and mayonnaise
- Desserts and confectionary



## RED FOODS STOP AND AVOID

Gluten containing grains:

- Wheat of all types (spelt, farro, triticale, dinkel, khorsan, KAMUT, durum)
- Rye
- Oats (including wheat free oats)
- Barley

Any foods made from gluten containing grains eg:

- Cous cous
- Bulgur
- Semolina
- Bread
- Bakery items such as cakes biscuits and muffins
- Pastry
- Pasta
- Malt and malted products e.g. MILO

*\* Note this is not an exhaustive list*



## SOURCE WITH CONFIDENCE

Products endorsed by Coeliac Australia have been tested to ensure they are gluten free. Where you see the Coeliac Australia Cross Grain logo you don't need to read the label to know the product is gluten free. For more information visit [www.coeliac.org.au](http://www.coeliac.org.au)

## GOOD TO KNOW



Gluten free alternatives are available for many traditional gluten containing foods. Check with your supplier for more information.



## SOURCING BEST PRACTICE CHECKLIST:

- Always follow your goods delivery process to ensure allergen free products are true to their specifications.
- When sourcing new products choose those that can meet multiple allergen free needs eg gluten free, nut free, egg free.
- Portion sized clearly labelled allergen free snacks and breads avoids wastage and cross contamination but they must be rated well for accessibility\* to ensure they can be easily opened.

### GOOD TO KNOW



- Never assume a replacement product or the same product in a different sized pack will have the same allergen status as the original.
- Check every label on every product with product specifications and PIF forms at receipt
- Wheat free doesn't always mean gluten free

\* Accessibility is rated by Arthritis Australia. Visit [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au) for more information

## SCENARIO

In an aged care home with independent living units, the kitchen prepares the meals.

Carers have the responsibility for serving meals and for providing other components of the meal e.g. breakfast, snacks, bread, spreads, condiments etc.

Joe was referred to the dietitian because while appearing to eat well, he was losing weight and having regular episodes of diarrhoea. Joe has coeliac disease and severe dementia. No one else in the home has been unwell.

The dietitian visits and makes an assessment of his nutrition status and suspects he may be getting gluten in his diet.

Upon questioning Joe, the care and kitchen staff, the dietitian identifies a number of anomalies in the provision of the gluten free diet:

1. Rice Bubbles at breakfast comes from a large unlabelled plastic container. There are no gluten free Rice Bubbles in the kitchen area, so the assumption is that these are not gluten free.
2. Staff do not refer to any documentation when serving meals, they rely on memory to know who needs each diet. Agency staff do not necessarily know that Joe has coeliac disease.
3. No staff in the unit have had training in provision of allergen free diets.
4. Staff use the same toaster for regular bread and gluten free bread.
5. When Joe goes out on excursions with lifestyle staff, who have no documentation and no training regarding his dietary needs, he doesn't get gluten free food.

The dietitian concludes that Joe is malnourished because of a diet containing large amounts of gluten.

## ACTIONS

- **Staff must refer to documentation of dietary requirements at all times.**
- **All staff who provide food to residents must receive training regarding allergen and gluten management.**
- **No food must be provided for Joe unless it comes from the kitchen labelled with his name and a gluten free sticker OR directly from a box with a gluten free label**
- **A separate toaster must be used for gluten free bread.**

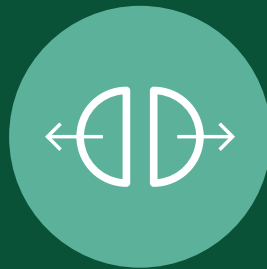
## OUTCOME

Joe's diarrhoea settled and in time, he began to gain weight.

KEY PRINCIPLE THREE

# Separation

Separation prevents cross contamination so that allergen free foods and ingredients stay allergen free



## RESPONSIBILITY



FOOD SERVICE  
MANAGERS



COOKS  
& CHEFS



FOOD SERVICE  
ASSISTANTS



DIETETIC  
ASSISTANTS &  
MENU MONITORS



NURSING



LIFESTYLE AND  
ACTIVITY STAFF

## SEPARATION

# Managing Cross Contamination

Separation of allergens to prevent cross contamination needs to take place not only in the kitchen but where ever food is stored, handled or transported.

## PROCESS

Avoid cross contamination by:

Having a Food Safety Plan that addresses allergen hazards, including gluten

Storing food in sealed and labelled containers away from allergen containing foods

Washing hands and changing into clean personal protective equipment (gloves, aprons and hats) before preparing allergen free food

Prepare allergen free meals first or in a dedicated allergen zone. Always clean and sanitise preparation areas between all meal preparations.

Use separate and colour coded cleaning cloths for allergen free preparation areas

Dedicate and colour code utensils for allergen free food preparation

## RESPONSIBILITY



COOKS & CHEFS



FOOD SERVICE MANAGERS

## SCENARIO

Vincent is responsible for preparing the breakfasts in a small rural hospital. He knows that gluten free food preparation should be completed before other foods are made so he always toasts the gluten free bread before the gluten containing bread in the toaster kept in the kitchen.

Roy, the food safety auditor visited the hospital and in reviewing allergen management processes was concerned that crumbs from the gluten containing bread last toasted could be contaminating the gluten free toast made first each morning. Vincent suggested dusting the toaster of crumbs after use, however, Roy suggested best practice would be to purchase a second toaster that would be dedicated for use only with gluten free bread and positioned well away from the main toaster. He also recommended this toaster be stored in a sealed container to prevent additional contamination from airborne flour and crumbs from the work space.

## OUTCOME

**Allergen management processes were reviewed and a dedicated toaster as well as utensils and chopping boards were purchased, colour coded and stored separately in sealed containers for use only in gluten free food preparation.**

## GOOD TO KNOW



Did you know cross contamination can occur when:

- Ingredients are stored uncovered or unsealed
- There are no dedicated utensils for use in allergen free food preparation
- The same toaster is used for both normal and gluten free bread
- The same spread is used for all menu items
- The same water is used to cook gluten free and gluten containing pasta or the same colander is used to drain these.
- Deep fryers, grills and temperature probes are used for allergen free and allergen containing foods

# Be alert to hazards

When sourcing new products, choose those that can meet multiple allergen free needs.



## STORAGE

- Store foods according to your Food Safety Plan - in a dedicated area or on the top shelf.
- Decant, seal and clearly label products with ingredients, allergen statements and use by or best before date
- Be consistent and aware of colour coding for allergen storage
- Store all pre-plated meals covered and labelled
- Only ever decant new product into clean, empty containers and always apply new labels detailing ingredients, allergen statements and use by or best before date



## MEAL PREPARATION

- Clean surfaces as per Food Safety Plan using allergen standard operating procedure
- Wear and change gloves, aprons and hats/ hairnets (PPE) as per your Food Safety Plan
- Use dedicated utensils (ideally colour coded or marked) for gluten free food preparation
- Double check gluten free ingredients to confirm they are still gluten free
- Prepare gluten free meals in isolation in designated area or prepare gluten free meals first. Ensure they are covered and clearly labelled once completed
- Use squeeze bottles for gluten free sauces, salad dressings and mayonnaise to minimise contamination
- Use dedicated products for allergen free food preparation where risk of contamination is high such as spreads and condiments for sandwiches
- Check all allergen free meals are accurate prior to leaving the kitchen - this will be done by an appropriately trained staff member



## COOKING

- Use standard recipes to ensure all dietary needs are met, not just those that are allergen free
- Ensure shared equipment is thoroughly clean and free of residue before use for allergen free food i.e. whisks, mixers etc.
- Use dedicated equipment to prepare allergen free food. This includes:
  - Fryers
  - Grills
  - Fan forced ovens
  - Toasters (or bon bon wrap\* gluten free items in a sandwich press)
  - Utensils such as temperature probes, knives, tongs, chopping boards and basting brushes

\*Wrap in baking paper and seal ends with either a fold or a twist like a bon bon



### SERVICE/MEAL DELIVERY

- Cover meals to prevent cross contamination
- Transport allergen free meals to minimise contact with other foods eg on the top shelf of the trolley or on a separate trolley
- Serve spreads such as butter, margarine, honey, jam and peanut butter in accessible portion packs
- Deliver allergen free meals separate to other meals in dining room service



### KEEPING ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT VISUAL

- Designate a colour to represent 'allergen free' utensils
- Keep designated allergen free utensils in a clean, sealed and clearly labelled container or tool box
- Use colour coded plates for allergen free meals
- Apply stickers declaring allergen free status to all prepared foods



### FOOD BROUGHT FROM HOME

- Be aware of your facilities policies and procedures for foods brought from home and manage accordingly.
- Check your procedures regarding the storage of foods in patient/resident or ward fridges and pantries

### BEST PRACTICE CHECKLIST:

- Allergen or gluten free meals prepared first or in dedicated areas
- Dedicated colour coded utensils for allergen free food handling.
- Dedicated equipment for gluten and allergen free food preparation.
- Clearly identify all allergen free foods with appropriate labels.

### GOOD TO KNOW



- Good cleaning practices as outlined in your Food Safety Plan are a vital part of allergen control
- Gluten is not destroyed at high temperatures and will not dissolve in hot oil or water
- Even trace amounts of allergens can cause symptoms in those with allergies
- Incident registers for cross contamination and corrective actions are important to maintain

KEY PRINCIPLE FOUR

# Service

Delivering allergen free meals to the right person every time



## RESPONSIBILITY



LIFESTYLE AND  
ACTIVITY STAFF



FOOD SERVICE  
ASSISTANTS



NURSING



DIETETIC  
ASSISTANTS &  
MENU MONITORS

# Setting the meal tray

## RESPONSIBILITY



FOOD SERVICE ASSISTANTS

## PROCESS

Allergen free meals should be easily identified at the tray level by:

Addition of a “special diet” sticker on the tray liner and menu



Coloured menu that identifies the special diet



Coloured tray mat, tray and crockery

## PROVIDING MEAL ASSISTANCE

Meal assistance is often needed by those in hospital or residential aged care.

Before assisting always STOP, wash your hands and ensure personal protective equipment is clean.

# Meal delivery

## RESPONSIBILITY



LIFESTYLE AND ACTIVITY STAFF



FOOD SERVICE ASSISTANTS



NURSING



DIETETIC ASSISTANTS & MENU MONITORS

## PROCESS

Deliver plated and covered allergen free meals according to internal procedures

Trolley service:

- Separate allergen free meals from others by storing on top of trolley, or
- Deliver allergen free meals at a separate time on a separate trolley

Dining Room service:

- Serve allergen free meals first using designated utensils
- Deliver meals directly to the individual using designated crockery

Never add or change items on a special diet meal after it has been plated or left the kitchen



Identify allergen free meal recipients using your facilities approved procedure before leaving the meal:

- Three point check; name, date of birth, medical record or Unit Record Number (URN), or
- Visual identification from photograph on meal list, or
- Delivery by staff who can verify identity

For hospital patients with dietary information displayed at the bedside, check this is consistent with the diet being delivered

Where those with special dietary needs are not in their room or at their table, do not leave the meal. Return the meal to the kitchen and notify the relevant staff

SERVICE

# Mid-meal delivery

RESPONSIBILITY



LIFESTYLE AND  
ACTIVITY STAFF



FOOD SERVICE  
ASSISTANTS



NURSING



DIETETIC  
ASSISTANTS &  
MENU MONITORS

PROCESS

Check individually sealed packaging is intact and product is clearly labelled with allergen information



Ensure mid-meal trolley has a designated, clearly labelled area for allergen free items



Carry and refer to documentation such as a mid-meal list when delivering special dietary mid-meals

GOOD TO KNOW



- A laminated mid-meal list containing photographs of all residents and their dietary details is best practice in aged care homes.
- A laminated mid-meal list of food options with photographs for identification can support staff on mid-meal duty to accurately communicate allergen information to those who ask.

SCENARIO

Maria has recently been admitted to an aged care home. Her health has deteriorated and she is no longer managing at home. She has had a nut allergy for many years and has been vigilant about reading labels and being aware of cross contacts following an episode of exposure after eating out. She is highly anxious about whether she will receive the correct meals at her new home, despite reassurances from the chef.

The chef is diligent about meal preparation and understands issues with cross contamination. When the meal is delivered to her room, she asks the carer 'Is this meal nut free?' The carer often responds 'I don't know'. Maria has no confidence that she has the correct meal and relies on items that she keeps in her fridge or that her daughter brings in.

Maria starts to lose weight and is referred to the dietitian.

The dietitian spends time with Maria to understand her issues with food and also spends time with the chef and is confident that processes for a nut free diet are being followed. However, Maria's meals are not labelled nut free so Maria has no reassurance they are safe to eat.

The dietitian determined that Maria was not eating a sufficient diet because she was fearful that the meals provided weren't nut free and would make her unwell.

SOLUTION

**All of Maria's meals are now labelled with a sticker that says "Nut Free Meal Prepared by the Chef". Any commercial nut free items are provided in their packaging and other items have a nut free sticker.**

OUTCOME

**Maria now trusts her food is nut free, is enjoying her chef prepared meals and is regaining weight.**



# Supporting processes

**The use of supporting processes and documentation helps staff achieve a high standard of allergen diet management that results in greater trust and satisfaction among those they care for.**

## STANDARD RECIPES

Standardising recipes guarantees consistency in meal quality and nutritional content. But more importantly, when standardised recipes are used, allergen management is better and those in your care are safer.

Best practice with standardisation involves:

- Recipes identifying allergens (supports an Allergen Matrix) and special diet suitability
- Standard recipe updates are made following changes to ingredient product specifications
- Approval of recipe or menu substitutions by a dietitian for anyone with a food allergy or intolerance

## FOOD ALLERGEN MATRIX

An Allergen Matrix works hand in hand with standardised recipes to help staff understand, and communicate the nature of the allergens in the food they prepare and serve.

The Matrix is completed for each recipe based upon allergen details in the Product Specifications of each of its ingredient. When kept up to date the Matrix provides an at-a-glance reference to the allergen content of each menu item. Visit page 26 for links to online food allergen matrix templates.

## CLEANING AND SANITISING

A good cleaning schedule goes a long way to minimising the risk of cross contamination and is a requirement of your Food Safety Plan. Clearly display procedures for pre-cleaning and sanitising prior to the preparation of allergy free meals. Ensure clean PPE are available and clearly identified for use in the preparation of allergen free meals.

## FOOD BOUGHT FROM HOME

Policies and procedures should be in place to deal with food brought from home to ensure it is appropriately labelled, stored and handled. This should ensure that food safety risks are reduced and opportunities for cross contamination are minimised. Check your Food Safety Plan for more information.

## MANAGING INCIDENTS

Mistakes happen, but without documenting and reviewing the actions that led to them prevention cannot take place.

The Food Safety Plan should contain details that need to take place when an allergic reaction to a food provided from the kitchen occurs. This includes

- Notification to prevent others from being effected by the incident
- Retaining all food and documentation relating to the incident
- Logging incidents and all corrective actions that take place following their investigation

## STAFF TRAINING

Providing a service that meets its duty of care for vulnerable people with special dietary needs, means ensuring a skilled and informed team.

Catering staff form the core of this team however, they are supported by administration, nursing and dietetics.

Training is essential for anyone who plays a role in the food communication, delivery and preparation process regardless of whether they actually handle food.

Use this booklet and its accompanying pictorial fact sheets to support your training program. Visit page 26 for the links to these.

### GOOD TO KNOW



- All staff (nursing, administration & foodservice staff) should be trained in allergen awareness with the best time for this being as part of orientation.
- In accordance with healthcare accreditation standards for food service, nursing and administration staff who have responsibility for updating meal orders and kitchen documentation should have training updated annually.



## REFERENCES

1. ASCIA and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia. National Allergy Strategy. August 2015 [www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au](http://www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au)
2. Coeliac Australia & Nestlé Professional. IHHC 2017 Annual Conference Survey (n=36).
3. Hendrie G, et al. CSIRO Healthy Diet Score. 2016 [www.csiro.au/en/Research/Health/CSIRO-diets/CSIRO-Healthy-Diet-Score](http://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Health/CSIRO-diets/CSIRO-Healthy-Diet-Score)
4. Anderson RP, et al. A novel sero-genetic approach determines the community prevalence of celiac disease and informs improved diagnostic pathways. BMC Medicine 2013;11:188

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Coeliac Australia, Gluten Free Standard for Food Service Providers® [www.coeliac.org.au/gf-standard/](http://www.coeliac.org.au/gf-standard/)

Statewide Food Services Queensland Health, Food Allergen Management in Foodservice - A Best Practice Guideline, 2018 [www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au/resources](http://www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au/resources)

Food Standards Australia New Zealand, Food Standards Code (3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.3.1) [www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/)

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS), National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards - EQUIP 6, 2017. [www.achs.org.au/programs-services/equipnational/](http://www.achs.org.au/programs-services/equipnational/)

Food Standards Australia New Zealand, ALLERGEN LABELLING SAVES LIVES Poster. [www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/foodallergies/Pages/Allergen-labelling.aspx](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/foodallergies/Pages/Allergen-labelling.aspx)

Coeliac Australia Gluten Free Online Training [www.coeliac.org.au/gluten-free-online-training/](http://www.coeliac.org.au/gluten-free-online-training/)

National Allergy Strategy, All about Allergens; Online training for foodservice [www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au/resources](http://www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au/resources)

Your Practical Guide to Gluten & Other Allergens in Healthcare booklet and Pictorial Fact Sheets [www.nestleprofessional.com.au/allergenfreeresources](http://www.nestleprofessional.com.au/allergenfreeresources)

Nestlé Professional Allergen matrix template [www.nestleprofessional.com.au/allergenfreeresources](http://www.nestleprofessional.com.au/allergenfreeresources)

'Easy Eat' food allergen matrix [www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au/resources](http://www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au/resources)

### HOW CAN NESTLÉ PROFESSIONAL HELP?

Nestlé Professional has an extensive portfolio of gluten free products, ranging from gravies, sauces, soups, boosters, mashed potato and dessert mixes. This portfolio of gluten free ingredients offers versatility, choice, variety in flavour and convenience, to simplify allergen free menu planning and kitchen workload.

We guarantee our gluten free claims by closely collaborating with our own suppliers to ensure high quality gluten free ingredients, manufacturing within

purpose built gluten free production areas and testing every batch of product we make to verify its gluten free status. These stringent processes make Nestlé Professional a supply partner you can trust.

For further information on how Nestlé Professional can help you visit [www.nestleprofessional.com.au](http://www.nestleprofessional.com.au) or call 1800 20 30 50



### HOW CAN COELIAC AUSTRALIA HELP?

Having trained staff is critical when building trust with your patients and residents. Coeliac Australia has developed an easy to understand online training program to support food services. Coeliac Australia has also implemented a Gluten Free Accreditation Program easily identifiable by a unique gluten free symbol. The gluten free symbol assures your gluten free patients and residents that you follow best practice when preparing meals.

For further information on how Coeliac Australia can help you visit [www.coeliac.org.au](http://www.coeliac.org.au) or call 1300 458 836



### HOW CAN THE INSTITUTE OF HOSPITALITY IN HEALTHCARE HELP?

The IHHC offers its expertise to a variety of organizations, including government and statutory departments seeking advice on issues relating to all areas of support services, and is directly involved in formulating guidelines and recommendations affecting the Industry.

This Practical Guide to Gluten & Other Food Allergens in Healthcare is a good example of the collaboration of organizations in providing key

personnel within the industry with guidelines and information around the management of food allergens.

For more information how the IHHC or to be involved in it's programs visit [www.ihhc.org.au](http://www.ihhc.org.au) or call 03 9895 4450



