

Childminders in Scotland – Allergen Information

Allergic reactions can make people very ill and can sometimes lead to death. However there is no cure for food allergy. The only way someone can avoid getting ill is to make sure they don't eat the foods they are allergic to. Young children are particularly vulnerable because of their reduced levels of control over the foods they eat.

The Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 came into force in December 2011. It will build on current allergen labelling provisions for pre-packed foods and will introduce a new requirement for allergen information to be provided for foods sold non pre-packed or pre-packed for direct sale, for example meals provided in a childminder's premises. The new rules will apply from 13 December 2014, so you will need to make changes to your current practices soon.

As a childminder, it is your responsibility to ensure that you can provide allergen information for the food you serve and that this is accurate, consistent and verifiable.

You will need to be able to identify any child with a food allergy or intolerance and provide them with food which is safe for their consumption. Remember to check the ingredients list of foods you use and note the presence of allergenic ingredients, to avoid giving a food, which would trigger an allergic reaction, to any such child in your care.

The provision of allergen information concerns any foods purchased and pre-packed and non pre-packed, including home-cooked meals. Allergen information should be easily accessible and readily available to children in your care and their parents/carers.

There are several ways you might decide to do this:

- You could develop a weekly menu which declares the allergens contained in each meal and snack served to the children in your care and share this with parents
- You could declare the allergens contained in your daily menu on a notice/chalk board for parents to see each morning
- You could write to parents and let them know that you have allergen information available for all the food you provide to the children in your care and parents can ask to see this at anytime

There are 14 allergens currently listed under food law that you must declare. These are:

- Cereals containing gluten, e.g. wheat (including spelt and khorasan), rye, barley and oats and their hybridised strains
- Crustaceans, e.g. prawns, crab and lobster
- Eggs
- Fish
- Peanuts
- Soybeans
- Milk
- Nuts, e.g. almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew, macadamia nuts or Queensland nuts
- Celery (including celeriac)
- Mustard
- Sesame
- Sulphur dioxide/sulphites (preservatives used in some foods and drinks) at levels above 10mg per kg or per litre.
- Lupin
- Molluscs, e.g. clams, mussels, whelks, oysters, snails and squid

Further Guidance:

Food Allergen Labelling

<http://www.food.gov.uk/science/allergy-intolerance/label>

Allergen Information for Loose Foods

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>

Guidance for Safer Food Better Business for Childminders

<http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/sfbb/sfbbchildminders>

'Think Allergy' Poster

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/thinkallergy.pdf>

Allergy UK

<http://allergyuk.org>

Anaphylaxis Campaign

<http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk>

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