Food Allergy Awareness for Food Workers
What to Know & What to Do

What to Know
Food Allergens Can Cause Anaphylaxis & Death Within Minutes

**SYMPTOMS:**
(may range from mild to life threatening)
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Hives/itching on face and extremities
- Swelling of the face and extremities
- Tightening of the throat/difficulty swallowing
- Sudden vomiting, cramps, or diarrhea
- Loss of consciousness

**FACTS:**
- Approximately 15 million Americans including 6 million children have food allergies
- Any food can be an allergen
- Even trace amounts of allergens can trigger an allergic reaction
- The most common food allergens are known as “The Big 8” (see list below)

**Major Food Allergens “The Big 8”**

- **Peanuts**
- **Shellfish**
- **Tree Nuts**
- **Eggs**
- **Milk**
- **Soy**
- **Fish**
- **Wheat**

What to Do
Whenever a guest informs you of a food allergy concern:

**Service Staff: Communicate**
- Take the request seriously
- Repeat what the guest says to ensure that you understand
- Tell the Manager, Person-in-Charge, or Chef
- Inform the guest of your findings

**Cooks and Chefs: Control Sources of Cross-Contact**
- Cooking oils, splatter, and steam from allergen containing foods
- Wash your hands and change your gloves
- Clean and sanitize food prep equipment and utensils
- Carefully check ingredient labels

⚠️ If a guest has a food allergic reaction, call 911 immediately. ⚠️

For more info, contact the NJDOH Public Health and Food Protection Program at 609-826-4935 or visit www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/food-drug-safety. The New Jersey Restaurant & Hospitality Association website is www.njrha.org. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration website is www.fda.gov.