

14 Allergens


Coming to a food label near you




The way allergens are labelled on prepacked foods is changing because of new regulations. The Food Information Regulation, which comes into force in December 2014, introduces a requirement that food businesses must provide information about the allergenic ingredients used in any food they sell or provide.

There are 14 major allergens which need to be mentioned (either on a label or through provided information such as menus) when they are used as ingredients in a food. Here are the allergens, and some examples of where they can be found:


1 Celery
This includes celery stalks, leaves, seeds and the root called celeriac. You can find celery in celery salt, salads, some meat products, soups and stock cubes.




2 Cereals containing gluten
Wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan wheat/Kamut), rye, barley and oats is often found in foods containing flour, such as some types of baking powder, batter, breadcrumbs, bread, cakes, couscous, meat products, pasta, pastry, sauces, soups and fried foods which are dusted with flour.




3 Crustaceans
Crabs, lobster, prawns and scampi are crustaceans. Shrimp paste, often used in Thai and south-east Asian curries or salads, is an ingredient to look out for.




4 Eggs
Eggs are often found in cakes, some meat products, mayonnaise, mousses, pasta, quiche, sauces and pastries or foods brushed or glazed with egg.




5 Fish
You will find this in some fish sauces, pizzas, relishes, salad dressings, stock cubes and Worcestershire sauce.




6 Lupin
Yes, lupin is a flower, but it's also found in flour! Lupin flour and seeds can be used in some types of bread, pastries and even in pasta.




7 Milk
Milk is a common ingredient in butter, cheese, cream, milk powders and yoghurt. It can also be found in foods brushed or glazed with milk, and in powdered soups and sauces.




8 Molluscs
These include mussels, land snails, squid and whelks, but can also be commonly found in oyster sauce or as an ingredient in fish stews.




9 Mustard
Liquid mustard, mustard powder and mustard seeds fall into this category. This ingredient can also be found in breads, curries, marinades, meat products, salad dressings, sauces and soups.




10 Nuts
Not to be mistaken with peanuts (which are actually a legume and grow underground), this ingredient refers to nuts which grow on trees, like cashew nuts, almonds and hazelnuts. You can find nuts in breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, nut powders (often used in Asian curries), stir-fried dishes, ice cream, marzipan (almond paste), nut oils and sauces.




11 Peanuts
Peanuts are actually a legume and grow underground, which is why it's sometimes called a groundnut. Peanuts are often used as an ingredient in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts, sauces (such as satay sauce), as well as in groundnut oil and peanut flour.




12 Sesame seeds
These seeds can often be found in bread (sprinkled on hamburger buns for example), breadsticks, houmous, sesame oil and tahini. They are sometimes toasted and used in salads.



13 Soya
Often found in bean curd, edamame beans, miso paste, textured soya protein, soya flour or tofu, soya is a staple ingredient in oriental food. It can also be found in desserts, ice cream, meat products, sauces and vegetarian products.



14 Sulphur dioxide (sometimes known as sulphites)
This is an ingredient often used in dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots and prunes. You might also find it in meat products, soft drinks, vegetables as well as in wine and beer.



For more information, visit: food.gov.uk/allergy or nhs.uk/conditions/allergies
 Sign up to our allergy alerts on food.gov.uk/email, or follow #AllergyAlert on Twitter and Facebook
 Let's keep connected at food.gov.uk/facebook
 Join our conversation @[food.gov.uk/twitter](https://twitter.com/foodgovuk)
 Watch us on food.gov.uk/youtube

Your quick guide to food allergies and intolerances



A food allergy is caused when your immune system mistakenly thinks that certain foods are a threat to your body. A food intolerance doesn't usually involve your immune system, however, coeliac disease is an intolerance to gluten and does involve the immune system.

Allergy facts

Between **1-2%** of adults...
 ...and **5-8%** of children in the UK have a food allergy*
 At least **1 in 100** people has coeliac disease**

What is a...

Food allergy
Food allergic reactions range from mild to very serious. Symptoms can affect different areas of the body at the same time and can include rashes, swelling, chest tightness and shortness of breath. Serious cases can lead to anaphylaxis (a life-threatening reaction) and death.

Food intolerance
Food intolerance can be caused by difficulties digesting certain ingredients, such as lactose from milk. Symptoms include diarrhoea, bloating and stomach cramps and usually only occur several hours after eating the food.

Coeliac disease
Coeliac disease is caused by a reaction of the immune system to gluten. Symptoms include bloating, diarrhoea, tiredness, mouth ulcers, anaemia, osteoporosis and usually occur several hours after eating the food.

All types of food can cause a reaction. However, certain proteins are responsible for most food allergies and intolerances. The most common food allergies in children are caused by:

Milk Eggs Peanuts Tree nuts Fish

Hospital admissions due to food allergies in the UK increased by **500%** between **1990** and **2007*****

Odds that a child with **two allergic parents** will develop allergies: **70%**
 Odds that a child with **one allergic parent** will develop allergies: **33%**

Treatment

There is no cure for food allergies, food intolerance or coeliac disease. The only way to prevent a reaction is to avoid the foods that make you ill.

However if you have a mild or moderate food allergic reaction you can use **antihistamines** to relieve the symptoms. In case of a more serious reaction (including anaphylaxis), a medication called **adrenaline**, contained in an **auto-injector pen** can be used.

For more information, visit: food.gov.uk/allergy or nhs.uk/conditions/allergies
 Sign up to our allergy alerts on food.gov.uk/email, or follow #AllergyAlert on Twitter and Facebook
 Let's keep connected at food.gov.uk/facebook
 Join our conversation @[food.gov.uk/twitter](https://twitter.com/foodgovuk)
 Watch us on food.gov.uk/youtube

Sources:
 ** FSA Report of 2008 T07 Food Allergy and Intolerance Research Programme Review - <http://media.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/t07review2008.pdf>
 *** Bingley, B. J. et al. (2004) Undiagnosed coeliac disease at age seven: population based prospective birth cohort study British Medical Journal 329: 322-323
 **** Gupta R, Sheikh A, Strachan DP, Anderson HR (2007): Time Trends in Allergic Disorders in the UK