

## **Instructor's Guide: Chapter 8**

### **Allergens**

#### **One Week Before**

Watch the video Chapter.

Determine how to introduce the training.

Determine whether you will want to add items to the quiz based on information you present that is specific to your facility's allergen program(s).

Determine the class size and print the appropriate number of copies of the quiz.

#### **Suggested Introduction Content**

How many of you have ever been told that you are allergic to something?

It's not unusual to ask that question and have a lot of hands go up. Allergies are very common. "Allergen" is the word for what a person is allergic to. We probably hear the most about allergens like ragweed pollen and other pollen from other plants. The everyday name for allergies to those is "hay fever." Some people are allergic to bee stings and other insect bites. Some are allergic to penicillin or other medicines. One reason plastic disposable gloves have become so widely used is that some people are allergic to the latex rubber in rubber gloves. There are many different kinds of allergies.

Most allergic reactions are not serious: for example, those causing a runny nose or a skin rash. But allergic reactions can be very serious and can cause death. In some cases the allergy attack can produce an asthma attack or anaphylactic shock. The victim's airway swells shut so they can't breathe or their organs start to shut down. Fortunately, only a very small number of people ever have allergic reactions that violent.

Some people are allergic to food ingredients that the rest of us can eat without worry. If we eat peanuts or peanut butter regularly, it's a little hard for us to understand how sick some people become from just a trace amount of it – a tiny dust-sized speck. That's why airlines don't serve peanuts as snacks anymore. Some people said they were getting seriously ill just from being in the same airplane cabin with the allergen.

And that's why we in the food industry need to know about food allergies and what we can do to help our customers avoid getting sick or even dying from an allergen in the food that they didn't even know was there.

When an allergen that is an ingredient in one product gets into another product that is not supposed to contain it, that is called “cross-contamination.”

We'll see a video on food allergens and how we protect against cross-contamination. Then there will be time for your questions and finish up with a short quiz.

## **Video Lesson Content**

Allergens are a serious problem.

One in four American children has some food allergy (U.S. National Center for Health Statistics).

Allergies can result in death from anaphylactic shock or a severe asthma attack.

90 percent of food allergy reactions are caused by a small group of foods.

The 8 major allergens (US)

Peanuts

Tree nuts

Milk and dairy products

Fish

Shellfish

Soybeans, soy products

Wheat, wheat products

Canada adds

Sesame seeds

Sulfites

Labels must clearly indicate if a product contains one of the major allergens.

This may be done with a separate statement, such as “contains peanuts” or the allergen clearly indicated in the list of ingredients. In some cases, the allergen source must be listed in parentheses after the common name of the ingredient – for example: “whey” – followed by “milk.” in parentheses.

We must guard against cross-contamination (an allergen from one product or ingredient list

getting into another product.

Cross-contamination can occur where food or ingredients are...

- Received
- Stored
- Formulated
- Processed
- Packaged

Follow company policy re:

- Logging shipments received and other record keeping
- Proper labeling of containers of ingredients and batches
- Covering and sealing containers
- Never substitute an ingredient for another without approval

Documentation Must Contain:

- Product identity
- Quantity
- Date and Time
- Where Stored

If your responsibilities include labeling/packaging, make sure all labels are correct and report any stock of labels/packages with out of date or incorrect ingredients lists.

Six key rules about allergens

- Keep and store food with allergenic ingredients so it doesn't contaminate other products.
- Be alert for activities, conditions that could cause cross contamination.
- Use only the designated utensils and equipment when working with the food product.
- Only mix batches together when it is specifically approved and when you have checked to verify the identity of the batches.
- Verify packaging and labeling information, especially at change-over from one product to another.
- Always follow proper cleaning and sanitation procedures.

**Quiz on following page.**

**Quiz – Available as a separate printable document on the teaching CD.**

1. Which of the following is true about allergies?
  - A. Food allergies are common, but not serious medical conditions.
  - B. A person must ingest a very large amount of an allergen before having a serious allergic reaction.
  - C. Some people have very severe food allergies that can result in anaphylactic shock and death.
  
2. How many categories of major food allergens are listed by U.S. food regulatory agencies?
  - A. 8
  - B. 38
  - C. 4
  
3. Canada adds two additional major allergens to the list. They are...
  - A. Sesame seeds and sulfites.
  - B. Broccoli and green beans.
  - C. Chicken and beef.
  
4. Cross contamination with an allergen can occur...
  - A. anywhere in the facility from where ingredients are received through the area where the product is packaged and sealed.
  - B. only in the areas where the food ingredients are being mixed to make the product.
  - C. only in receiving and storage areas.
  
5. Which of the following groups of ingredients does not contain any major allergen?
  - A. Peanuts, tree nuts, soybeans
  - B. Milk, dairy products, wheat, wheat products
  - C. Carrots, lettuce, celery
  - D. Fish, shellfish

**Answer Key**

- 1.C**
- 2.A**
- 3.A**
- 4.A**
- 5.C**