



Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet



Food Allergy Requirements for Retailers

Allergic reactions associated with the consumption of specific foods is a growing public health concern. While scientific advances in the treatment of food allergies continue to be made, no cure has been developed. In order to prevent serious health outcomes, consumers must avoid foods containing the allergen and seek medical attention as soon as any symptoms develop.



What are the major food allergens?

- **PEANUTS**
- **TREE NUTS:** almonds, pecans, walnuts, etc.
- **FISH:** Specify the species, such as bass, flounder, cod, etc.
- **CRUSTACEAN SHELLFISH:** Specify the species, such as crab, lobster, shrimp, etc. Molluscan shellfish (such as oysters, clams, mussels, or scallops) are not considered a major allergen.
- **MILK:** butter, buttermilk, cheese, whey, yogurt, etc.
- **EGGS**
- **WHEAT**
- **SOYBEANS:** Expeller pressed, extruded, or cold pressed soy oil does contain soy protein and must be listed on the label as an allergen. Highly refined oils derived from a major food allergen (soy or soybean oil) may be exempted from the allergen requirements since it may be highly processed to reduce the level of the allergen.
- **SESAME:** Commonly found in sesame oil, baked goods, granola, muesli, hummus, tahini, protein bars, margarine, herbal drinks.

What are the symptoms of an allergic reaction?

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may appear minutes or hours after the person has eaten the food. They can include:

- Tingling sensation in the mouth
- Swelling of the tongue and throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Hives
- Vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- Drop in blood pressure
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

What is cross-contact and how do I prevent it?

Cross-contact is when food preparation equipment comes into contact with an allergen. You cannot remove allergens through cooking, deep frying or sanitizing. This is why separate equipment, and sometimes a separate facility, must be used to prepare food that includes a food allergen. If separate equipment for allergens is not available, surfaces must be adequately cleaned and sanitized to remove allergens.

What kitchen items should I check to prevent cross-contact?

- Cutting boards
- Mixing bowls
- Electronic equipment
- Fryers
- Oven mitts and aprons
- Pots and pans
- Storage containers
- Utensils

Who is required to train employees about allergens?

The person in charge (PIC) is responsible for training food employees about the serious nature of food allergies, including allergic reactions, anaphylaxis and death (the PIC must be aware of the requirements on the [demonstration of knowledge fact sheet](#)). Employees must understand:

- The major food allergens.
- Food allergen ingredient identities and labeling.
- How to avoid cross contamination during food preparation and service.
- Food allergy awareness as it relates to their assigned duties.

How must allergens be listed on a food label?

If a food product contains a major food allergen – including in the colors, flavors or spice blends – the label must list the allergen in the ingredient statement. More information can be found on the [retail labeling requirements fact sheet](#).

Learn more on the web:

- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection:
 - [Wisconsin food code and additional fact sheets](#)
 - [Food allergens infographic](#)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration:
 - [Guidance for Industry Questions and Answers Regarding Food Allergens \(Edition 4\)](#)
 - [Food Allergens/Gluten-Free Guidance Documents and Regulatory Information](#)
- [ATCP 75: Retail Food Establishments](#)