

GFYG Food Services Protocols for Food Allergies & Anaphylaxis

Allergic reactions can be life-threatening and people who know they are at risk must always remain vigilant when food is concerned. Therefore it is the responsibility of adult person(s) with known allergies, (their parents or guardians when children are involved), to disclose the seriousness of the allergy to any persons providing them with food, including hosts of catered events. It is then the hosts responsibly to forward the allergies of their guests to the food services provider. Only when these conditions are met well in advance of a catered event, will a food services provider be able to accommodate special dietary requests.

However, some people may not know yet that they have an allergy, or experience a reaction to a food that is similar to something they know they are allergic to. Under these unpredictable circumstances, it is not possible for outside parties to be fully prepared for an allergic or anaphylactic response.

It remains the responsibility of persons with allergies to safeguard their own health, research foods that may cause similar reactions, wear a Medic Alert bracelet, and carry any medication they may require.

Be Prepared

The best cure is prevention: communication is key! When you know members of your dining party, or event guests have allergies, it is essential that restaurant or catering staff be informed prior to dining. Advance notice makes it more likely that staff will be able to accommodate special requests.

At the Good For You Gourmet, we are happy to prepare meals that accommodate special dietary requests as well as meals that do not contain specific allergens. However, as this will require the purchase and special handling of specially packaged, certified allergen free ingredients, both staffing and food costs will be affected. To allow administration time to factor in costs, the Good For You Gourmet requires full disclosure of all allergens at the time quote is provided: any further special dietary requests will result in increased costs.

Clients Responsibility

Full disclosure of special dietary requests at time menu is being planned, and before quote price is assigned. Any requests made after quote is approved will effect an increase in final cost.

Caterers Responsibilities

During the planning stages, GFYG staff will:

- 1) ask potential clients if their guests have any special dietary needs as well as non-allergy based requests, including vegetarian, vegan.-
- 2) take note of any serious anaphylactic allergies, and inform the client if we are able to accommodate;
- 3) take note of number of portions required for each set of allergies;
- 3) provide a menu and pricing that reflects the cost of catering to those specific needs. —

What is anaphylaxis—

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of an allergic reaction – the extreme end of the allergic spectrum. The whole body is affected, usually within minutes of exposure to the allergen but occasionally after one to two hours. Common causes include foods, insect stings, latex exposure and medications.

What are the symptoms?

Any or all of the following symptoms may be present:

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- Itching or a strange metallic taste in the mouth
- Swelling of the throat and tongue
- Difficulty in swallowing saliva or speaking
- Difficulty in breathing – due to severe asthma or throat swelling
- Hives (nettle rash) anywhere on the body
- Generalised flushing of the skin
- Abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting
- Sudden feeling of weakness/faint (drop in blood pressure)
- A sense of impending doom
- Collapse and unconsciousness

Medications should be readily available and knowing what to take and when to take them is essential. If a severe reaction was to occur, an ambulance should always be called without delay. Action Plan...for the person with the food allergy—

- Obtain detailed information about ingredients of every food you plan to eat
- Ask where and how the foods chosen are to be cooked
- Discuss and assess whether cross contamination is likely - from foods being chopped, prepared or cooked together. Cooking oil, spoons, knives, pans, grills and chopping boards are the usual culprits
- Tell the chef about the potential severity of reactions that can be caused by tiny amounts of a particular food

Caterers will be much more receptive to this questioning if it is done in a polite manner and if they have a full understanding of why you are asking for this information. This is best done at a quiet time of day or at a pre-arranged time. Expecting full attention from a busy chef at peak time is unrealistic and unfair on the chef.

What can caterers do?—

Chefs and catering staff are usually happy to cater for customers with food allergies, especially if they have prior notice. Some prefer to make up the meal at the start of their shift before other foods contaminate the kitchen and cover it ready to reheat later.

In the event that an allergy request is introduced at an event, the person(s) with the allergy will be directed to speak with Chef OR Head Server, who will review the whole menu with guest. If any allergy inducing ingredients are present on the menu, it is recommended that the guest not eat any of the food, as there is always a chance of cross contamination. —

For more information, please contact Chef Laura Moore of the Good For You Gourmet, via phone or text, at 250.514.1544



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