	Food Safety Guidelines Food Allergies or Sensitivity			Document #:	1.2.6.2
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FOOD ALLERGIES OR SENSITIVITY

Customers allergic or sensitive to certain foods or food additives need our special attention. Allergic reactions can occur virtually to any food. It is the protein content of a food that is the cause of most food allergies. The foods **most commonly** associated with allergic reactions or sensitivity include:

- Peanuts
- Tree Nuts (*almonds, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, etc.*)
- Fish
- Crustacean Shellfish (*crab, lobster, shrimp*) *
- Wheat
- Soybeans
- Eggs
- Milk

Additionally for Canada:

- Shellfish such as clams, mussels, oysters, scallops*
- Sesame Seeds
- Sulphites
- Mustard


The above list includes also any food ingredient that contains protein derived from these foods.

Some additives, such as MSG (*monosodium glutamate*), sulfites & sulfates, nitrites & nitrates, and yellow dyes, may also cause an adverse reaction in some people.

Most allergies occur in children and are often outgrown before adulthood. However, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish allergies are rarely outgrown. Typical symptoms of an allergic reaction may include vomiting, swelling of face and lips, difficulty breathing, coughing, sneezing and watery eyes, itchy, bumpy and red skin, or in rare cases, anaphylactic shock (*), which can result in death if not treated promptly. For example, **peanuts** can provoke an anaphylactic reaction.

Some Facts About Peanut Allergy

- ◆ Peanut oil refined by the typical U.S. or Canadian process (hot processed) **does not contain** detectable protein and is therefore free of the allergen.
Some oil extraction processes (i.e., cold pressed) may not exclude protein. However, cold pressed oils are rarely sold in the U.S. or Canada. They are usually found in well-labeled containers in health food and gourmet food stores. Sodexo specifications require hot-processing of all edible oils.
- ◆ Cooking oils **can become contaminated** with peanut protein.
If oil is used to fry products containing peanuts, it will likely pick up peanut protein and become allergenic. Subsequent use of such oil for frying other foods may present a hazard to peanut-hypersensitive individuals.
- ◆ **Any food** can become contaminated with peanut protein (or any other protein of a food associated with allergens) and then cause a serious allergic reaction.
Avoid cross-contamination of food. Carefully clean and sanitize utensils, food

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contact surfaces, food containers, soft service machines, grills, blenders, fryers and other processing equipment, etc.

(*) "Anaphylaxis is a rare but potentially fatal condition in which several different parts of the body experience food-allergic reactions at the same time. Symptoms may progress rapidly and include severe itching, hives, sweating, swelling of the throat, breathing difficulties, lowered blood pressure, unconsciousness and even death." (From "UNDERSTANDING FOOD ALLERGY", American Academy of Allergy & Immunology, in cooperation with IFIC (International Food Information Council Foundation)).

WHAT WE NEED TO DO

- Avoid cross-contamination between foods. Thoroughly **clean and sanitize** all food contact surfaces, food containers and utensils before and after each use.
- Always use **separate** cooking and serving utensils for each food item.
- **Wash hands** thoroughly and often.
- **Label** all soft serve machines, self-service containers and other food dispensers clearly and correctly.
- Show the **ingredient statement** (label) for purchased products to the customer, if requested.
- Tell the customer if an ingredient statement (label) is **not** available.
- Show the **recipe** for any product produced in the unit to the customer, if so requested.
- **Never substitute** recipe ingredients without explaining the change to all employees **before** service begins **and** changing the menu board (if applicable).
- Be **as specific as possible**, when advertising your menu. For customers concerned about allergic reactions, "Chicken Salad Bombay with Soy Peanut Dressing" provides a **clearer description** than "Chicken Salad Bombay".
- **Never guess** the content of any food.
- Never say: "I don't know". **When in doubt**, refer the customer's food allergy questions to the manager or supervisor.
- Never say: "No, there is no (name of allergen, i.e., peanuts, peanut butter) in this recipe or product", **unless you can verify it**.
- Always give your customer **correct information** and as much information as possible.