

Food Allergen Facts Restaurant Operators Need to Know



Did you know that more than 32 million people currently experience food allergies in the U.S.? That's 32 million people who could potentially experience an allergic reaction while dining at your restaurant. Staying up to date on current food allergen information not only helps you better accommodate restaurant guests—it could help save a life.

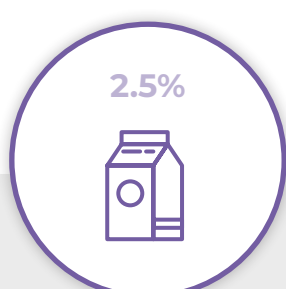
32 Million



Food Allergies in the U.S.



32 million people currently experience food allergies in the U.S. – 26 million adults and 5.6 million children.



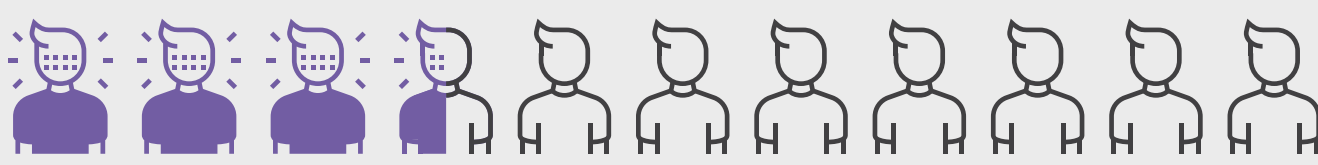
Milk is the most common food allergy among children, **affecting 2.5% of all children** under 3 years old.



200,000+ people visit the emergency room each year due to food allergy reactions.



More than **170 foods** have been reported to cause reactions in the U.S.

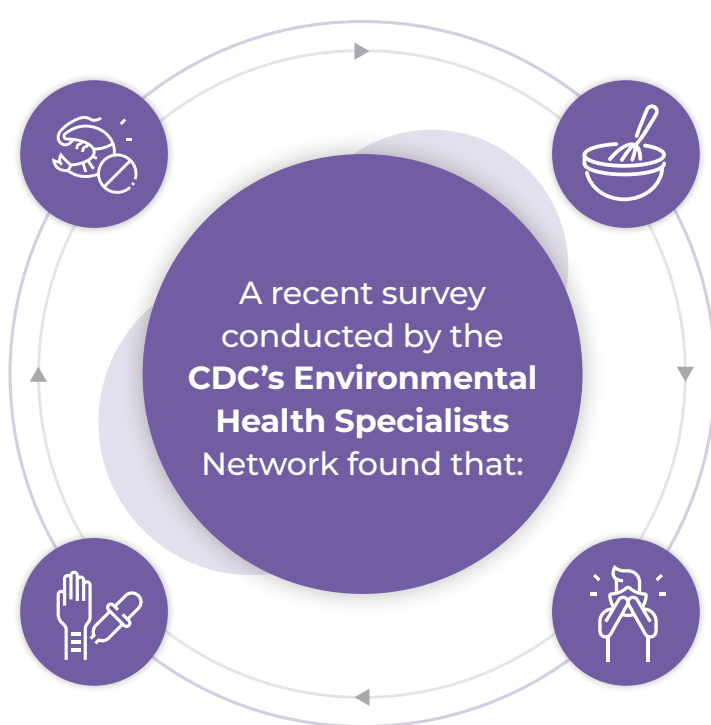


34% of people with food allergies have experienced serious reactions from food served in restaurants.

Food Allergies and Restaurants

More than **1 in 10 managers** and staff incorrectly believed that someone with a food allergy could safely eat a small amount of that allergen.

More than half the staff interviewed did not have specific training on food allergies, and training often didn't cover important information like what to do if a customer had an allergic reaction.



Most restaurants did not have separate areas and equipment for preparing and cooking allergen-free food.

Some food workers thought their restaurant might not know what to do if a customer has a food allergy emergency.

Most common food allergies are caused by these nine food items:

The Big

9



Milk



Wheat



Eggs



Soy



Crustacean Shellfish



Sesame



Peanuts



Fish



Tree Nuts



Sensitivity to sesame is on the rise—sesame allergies impact an estimated 1 million people in the U.S., and it was declared a major allergen in the United States in 2021.

Stay Alert

- If cross-contamination occurs: **DO NOT** serve the contaminated dish to the customer. Set it aside and ask your manager for assistance.
- If a severe allergic reaction occurs: call 9-1-1 and tell your manager.
- For more information and resources on food safety, visit foodsafetyfocus.com.

Keep Customers Safe with the All-New ServSafe Allergens & ServSafe Allergens Essentials

Part of preventing food allergy reactions is ensuring your employees are adequately trained and up to date on food safety best practices.

ServSafe Allergens and **ServSafe Allergens Essentials** provide your front and back-of-house staff with the knowledge they need to keep customers safe and satisfied. Visit info.servsafe.com to learn more.

Sources:
AAFA. (2022, April). Allergy Facts and Figures.
CDC. (2021, May 5). Preventing Food Allergies in Restaurants.
National Restaurant Association. (2022, May). Create an Allergen Communication Program.