

Background: The Company has assessed the risks posed by nut and sesame allergies and takes its responsibility in this area very seriously. The company therefore aspires to be a “Nut-Free site”, however, it is understood that this is difficult (if not impossible) to control completely. To this end the company will put into practice measures set out in this policy aiming to reduce the risk to staff, visitors and consumers of our products, who may have or develop a Nut or Sesame Allergy.

What is a food allergy?

Some Allergies that start in childhood can be outgrown but some such as allergy to nuts tends to persist into adulthood. No practical cure exists for food allergies and those affected must avoid foods they have an allergy to.

Foods can produce different types of allergic responses, from very slight to severe and occasionally fatal, depending on the dose, the individual and other factors.

During a reaction to a food, rapid release of chemicals in the body occurs, resulting in symptoms sometimes within minutes but occasionally up to 2 or more hours after consumption. In rare cases, a severe systemic reaction may occur, (anaphylactic shock) leading to a sudden drop in blood pressure, severe constriction of the airways, a generalized shock reaction and multiple organ failure. Only a small number of people with food allergies are at risk of such serious reactions, but there are nevertheless many documented cases of death resulting from accidental eating of problem foods.

Generally, the symptoms can only be felt by the allergic person (e.g. itching) and severe reactions are extremely rare.

These symptoms can include one or more of the following;

Skin problems (hives, itching, dermatitis, eczema, conjunctivitis, swelling of the lips, mouth).

Respiratory problems (rhinitis, asthma, breathing difficulties, swelling of the throat).

Gastrointestinal problems (nausea, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhoea).

Peanuts are thought to be the most likely food to cause anaphylaxis and death. It has been estimated that there is one death for every 200 episodes of anaphylaxis.

Policy

- 1) Staff will be trained in the methods involved in reducing the risk;
 - a) not bringing products containing nut ingredients onto site
 - b) Not consuming products containing nut ingredients on site
 - c) the importance of the handwashing procedures being followed.
 - d) Refresher training will also be in place to re-enforce this policy
- 2) Signage will be in place at building entrances to make visitors and contractors aware of the company nut policy.
- 3) Visitors and contractors will be asked on arrival to declare if they have any products containing nuts and also asking them to declare any allergies they may suffer from.
- 4) Canteen staff will monitor products and ingredients used in the canteen (including vending machines) with a view to eliminating any that have nuts or sesame stated as an ingredient on the packaging.

For avoidance of doubt, foodstuffs that do not contain nuts as main ingredient listed, but which are labelled as being produced in factories handling nuts, or that cannot be guaranteed nut free, or that may contain traces of nuts, will not be excluded from the site.