



LEVEL 4 – Student Journal

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Topic of choice: Allergies and Intolerances and the Importance within the Industry	Date Completed: 19.10.2021
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Allergies and Intolerances and the Importance within the Industry

Increasingly many people have become allergic to certain food in their diet. 21% of the United Kingdom population has a food intolerance, and 5% have a food allergy (STS Food Safety, 2019). Food allergies are abnormal immune reactions to foods (Wen & Kwon 372). Intolerance is an adverse reaction to a protein or non-protein constituent in food but the reaction, in this case, does not involve the immune system. Many people have intolerances to certain food items in their diet, with reactions varying from mild to potentially life-threatening.

Allergic Foods

When foods with allergens are taken various reactions, including vomiting, cramping, drop in blood pressure or swelling of the airways, may occur. Examples of food known to cause severe allergies include hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, fish, shellfish, eggs, dairy produce, soya, and wheat. Nuts are known to cause some of the most serious reactions. Allergies are rarely curable, and avoidance of allergic food is the key to preventing allergic reactions.

Causes for Allergies

It is not known why people develop allergies. However, individuals with conditions, such as asthma, eczema and hay fever have a higher predisposition to allergies than others. It is thought that there is a genetic influence in developing allergies and intolerance because the prevalence of certain allergies varies across regions and populations. Allergic reactions are caused by the proteins in the foods. The proteins release chemicals, such as histamine, which are responsible for reactions associated with food allergies.

Life-Threatening Conditions

Life-threatening conditions, such as anaphylaxis, cause individuals to collapse when exposed to even small amounts of the allergen. Anaphylaxis can be cause of the circulatory collapse, coma, or even death (Wen & Kwon, 2018). Anaphylaxis is characterized by hypotension, swelling in the throat and mouth, tightness in the chest, and asthmatic attack. Coeliac disease is caused by intolerance to protein gluten found in wheat, oats, barley, and rye. Coeliac is an autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks its own cells.



Dealing with Allergies and Intolerances in the Hospitality Industry

Some allergic reactions can be severe or life-threatening, yet the surest way of avoiding allergic reactions is by eliminating the offensive food items from one's diet (Maxime et al., 2016). There is need, thereof, for hotel operators to pay strict attention to avoiding allergens in customer meals. One of the challenges affected customers experience is inadequate food labels. It is important that customers are provided with accurate information since it is critical for the allergy suffer and could save them from life-threatening conditions such as anaphylaxis or celiac. A major challenge for customer with conditions such as gluten intolerance is that gluten-free foods are much more expensive. The hotels should aim at making everyone comfortable by offering comparable alternatives.

The hotels staff should take up courses that deliver food allergy knowledge. Customers should also be forthcoming with information on their allergy status, especially when getting service at hotels. Hotels should proactively provide customers with guides such as allergy cards because risks for allergens may exist even in foods that are not expected to have certain ingredients. This risk is heightened by hidden ingredients in foods.

Hotel staff should pay special attention to the preparation of food for allergic or intolerant persons because of the risk of cross-contamination. Cross- contamination happens when cooking equipment, such as knives or grills, are used across foods, thus, increasing the risk of passing allergens from non-allergic ones. Once a customer communicates to the service staff their allergic or intolerance status, this information should not only be shared with the service manager but also with the chef. This is important since chefs might include some ingredients in food that the service staff are not privy to.

Hotels should provide information on food allergies on their website. For those offering accommodation, they should have alternatives for hypoallergenic guests by thoroughly cleaning their rooms through a deep purification process that leaves the rooms clear of any allergens (Bordelon, 2016). Hotels should also provide guests with the option of alerting the hotel as they make bookings that they have allergies so that the hotel can prepare earlier for the allergic guests or those with intolerance.

In addition to educating staff on allergies and intolerances, the staff should be educated on how to identify and handle allergic reactions. Hotel staff should have adequate information on the symptoms to look out for, especially for severe allergic conditions, such as anaphylaxis or celiac. Symptoms associated with allergy hypersensitivities such as vomiting or severe cramps immediately after a meal or during a meal should be picked immediately by hotel staff and treated as allergic reactions (Gargano, 2021). Since some allergic reactions are fatal, it would be important that staff know what first aid to offer as they call paramedics to prevent fatalities.

The most successful way in handling guests who have allergies and intolerances is through adequate knowledge on the foods that have any traces of known allergens. Additionally, all the hotel staff must co-operate in ensuring guests are not exposed to any allergies unknowingly. The hotel staff, therefore, has to work as a team in ensuring that guests are not unknowingly exposed to allergies.



REFERENCE LIST

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