

Food Matters in Bassendean



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Town of Bassendean food safety newsletter

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Allergens

Australia has one of the highest allergy rates in the world. For every 100 customers using your business, two may have an allergy. Anaphylaxis, the most severe life-threatening form of allergic reaction, leads to the death of between 10 and 20 Australians each year.

Allergens include peanuts, tree nuts, milk, shellfish, eggs, wheat, fish, soy, sesame and lupins.


Food allergy is a serious issue, but with an allergy management plan in your business the risks can be minimised.

Avoid cross-contamination

Educating food handlers about cross-contamination has always been about separating raw and cooked foods. However, the same principles of avoiding cross-contamination apply to the handling of allergens in your kitchen:

- **SEPARATE FOODS** during preparation and storage.
- **WASH HANDS** between handling different foods.
- **CLEAN EQUIPMENT** between different foods.
- **LABEL** all food in storage.

Remember that for some people just a trace amount of the offending food can cause a life-threatening allergic reaction. Don't forget about the food additives you use as these may contain traces of allergens. Food prepared for a customer with allergies should be prepared fresh: **never just remove the offending allergen from a prepared dish.**

 Tools to reduce the risk of allergic reactions in your food business can be found at <https://allergyfacts.org.au/>

A lesson learnt

The City of Subiaco investigated a complaint where a 24-year-old woman had suffered an allergic reaction from eating food containing nuts at a local restaurant. After advising staff of her nut allergy she was told that the food she ordered was nut free. While dining at the restaurant symptoms developed and got worse, resulting in her being admitted and treated in hospital. Investigations revealed changes to the recipe had been made but these changes were not communicated between the back and front of house staff and, furthermore, the customer menus did not provide information to customers of which items may include common allergens.

At the end of their investigation the City took legal action under Section 16 (2) of the *Food Act 2008* against the business, which was convicted and fined \$40,000 plus costs.



Sanitising is the process of killing food-poisoning bacteria.

Cleaning and sanitising

According to the *Food Standards Code*, a food business must ensure that eating and drinking utensils and the food contact surfaces of equipment are in a clean and sanitary condition. A 'clean and sanitary' condition means the condition of a surface or utensil is clean, and has applied to it heat or chemicals so that the number of micro-organisms present has been reduced to a safe level.

Dishwashers that reach temperatures in excess of 77°C are capable of sanitising equipment. If a dishwasher of this capability is not available, a chemical food grade sanitiser is an alternative. Food grade sanitisers are made specifically for the food industry. It is important to ensure that both utensils and the food contact surfaces of fixtures, fittings and equipment are first cleaned with detergent and warm water, and then sanitised.

What needs to be sanitised?

- **EATING AND DRINKING UTENSILS** including glasses, cups, plates and cutlery.
- **EQUIPMENT CONTAINING FOOD CONTACT SURFACES USED FOR READY-TO-EAT FOODS** (i.e. food preparation benches, chopping boards and knives, meat slicers and mincers, blenders and stick/stab mixers and re-useable piping bags).

When using a food grade sanitiser it is important to follow the manufacturer's specific instructions and directions, which may include special contact times and dilution rates.

Tip:
Sanitising with a trigger spray bottle



A trigger spray bottle of non-rinse sanitiser may be suitable for:

- Sanitising if a capable dishwasher is not available.
- Sanitising equipment too large to go through a dishwasher.
- Sanitising equipment that is not dishwasher safe.
- Sanitising equipment that is too heavy or awkward.
- Sanitising food preparation benches.

Prior to applying the sanitiser, ensure the surface has first been cleaned.



Turn up the heat: check your bain-marie

Remember, a bain-marie needs to maintain potentially hazardous foods at 60°C or more.

The built-in thermometers on bains-marie display units should not be relied upon as they do not accurately measure the core temperature of the food.

Use your probe thermometer: place the clean thermometer probe into the food and wait until the temperature reading has stabilised. To measure the temperature of packaged food, place the probe of the thermometer between the two packages.

Adjust the bain-marie's heat settings as required until you are sure that the core food temperature is maintained at or above 60°C.

Recent prosecutions in WA

In November 2018 there were at least five prosecutions of food premises through the courts. These included:

A CAFÉ IN THE CITY OF PERTH: Failing to maintain the premises and equipment to a standard of cleanliness. Penalty \$31,800.30

A RESTAURANT IN THE CITY OF PERTH: Failing to maintain the premises and equipment to a standard of cleanliness. Penalty \$24,718.30

A CAFÉ IN THE CITY OF BELMONT: Failing to store potentially hazardous food under temperature control and poor standard of cleaning. Penalty \$18,800.70



A comprehensive list of prosecutions can be found at <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Health-for/Environmental-Health-practitioners/Food>