

The Food Information Regulations 2014 – Your celebration cakes

People with food allergies have to take great care when eating out to avoid certain foods that could cause them harm. For people with a food allergy, eating an allergen can cause symptoms ranging from mild swelling of the lips and tongue, through to anaphylaxis which can cause rapid death due to the body going into shock. Approximately 10 people die each year in this country due to a food allergy. There are approximately 1 million allergy sufferers in the UK. Having a food allergy can cause a major disruption to a person's lifestyle and those around them.

As a business you have a legal obligation to ensure that any food you produce or prepare is safe. From 14th December last year the Food Information Regulations 2014 introduced tighter controls for the sale of food and the presence of allergens and require you to provide information to your customers about allergenic foods sold unpackaged. A wide range of foods can cause allergies, however the new food law focusses on 14 main food types (known as allergens):

- Celery/celeriac
- Cereals containing gluten
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk



- Mollusc
- Mustard
- Nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame seeds
- Soya
- Sulphur dioxide



As a caterer, you have to know exactly what ingredients and allergens are in each product you make and ensure this information is provided to your customers on request. The celebration cakes you make, are usually eaten by a large number of people, whom you will never have direct contact with, so it is important that all the relevant information is provided to the purchaser of the cake(s) so that this can be passed on if necessary.

1. The first step to take is to make it clear to customers that you can provide them with allergen information if they should ask for it. For your business this is most likely to be on your website if you have one, and on any advertising material.

You would also be wise to ask your customers at the time of booking if the cake(s) is intended for a sufferer of allergies or is required to be an allergen-restricted product.

**FOOD ALLERGIES and
INTOLERANCES**

If you would like to know about the ingredients in my products please ask.















Thank you.

2. You need to find out which ingredients are present in **every** product you make. Including food colourings and decorations. Your suppliers have a legal requirement to provide you with this information so you should get all the information you need from the packaging of your food. Allergens listed will stand out from other ingredients so it will be easy for you to check. If this is not provided, contact your supplier and make sure they are aware why you need the information. If you change your supplier for any reason, make sure you review the ingredients present.

3. Record your findings. The Food Standards Agency have produced a matrix chart template with dishes listed down the left side, and allergens listed across the top. It is then easy to record and refer to if asked. The template can be found at www.food.gov.uk/allergy . If asked about which allergens are present in a

cake, you must not rely on a recall of knowledge, always check your chart. For your type of business you may wish to list cakes and finishes separately so that you can use different combinations.

This is an example:

DISHES														
	Celery	Cereals containing gluten	Crustaceans	Eggs	Fish	Lupin	Milk	Mollusc	Mustard	Nuts	Peanuts	Sesame seeds	Soya	Sulphur Dioxide
Vanilla sponge		✓		✓			✓ (butter)							
Chocolate sponge		✓		✓			✓ (butter)							

You should write out the recipe sheet for each cake and decorative finish and store it with your documentation. This is to prove that you follow a strict recipe and do not put allergens in unless they have been declared.

4. Think about how you store your ingredients. Is the original packaging kept, or do you have traceability of ingredients in a food? Are foods with allergens, and foods without allergens kept well separated and covered to prevent cross-contamination?
5. Do you have an effective method of cleaning food equipment and utensils between uses? Or do you have separate equipment and utensils for foods with and without allergens? You may have a completely separate workspace for food without allergens. If you are using the same workspace you must have a separate board and effective cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
6. If you have any staff to help deliver cakes or bake, have they been properly informed about the new allergen requirements and do they know where to find your allergen matrix or what to do if a customer asks them about allergens? Do they understand about preventing allergen cross-contamination?
7. Do you set up displays of cakes at buffets? If so, labels and signs must be clear and with the food at all times, whilst guests are serving themselves. Think about how you will identify allergens within each cake. How do you prevent cross contamination between different cakes? Do you have separate utensils? You may wish to cluster cakes together with certain allergens. You may wish to have specific allergen-restricted food identified, separated and protected.

What does compliance look like?

	check
1. I have the correct signage displayed in promotional material and website.	
2. I have checked through all ingredients and I know which allergens are present in all cakes I make.	
3. I have completed a food matrix and have recipe sheets where necessary.	
4. All foods are protected from cross contamination of allergens in storage.	
5. I have separate equipment and utensils for non-allergenic foods or I thoroughly wash and disinfect equipment and utensils between uses.	
6. My staff have been properly trained.	
7. I have prepared labels for cakes at the buffet table to indicate which allergens are present. Allergen-restricted cakes are identified, separated and protected.	
8. I remember to ask customers at the time of booking if they have any food allergies.	