

The Growing Concern Around Allergens: Protecting Your Customers

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(FARE)

Conference on Food Protection

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About Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE)

- The leading national nonprofit working on behalf of the 15 million Americans with food allergies.
- Formed in October 2012 between the merger of the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) and the Food Allergy Initiative (FAI).
- FARE's mission is to ensure the safety and inclusion of individuals with food allergies while relentlessly seeking a cure.

What is a Food Allergy?

- Eight foods make up 90% of all food allergy reactions:
 - » Peanut
 - » Tree nuts
 - » Milk
 - » Egg
 - » Wheat
 - » Soy
 - » Fish
 - » Shellfish



Food Allergy is a Serious Public Health Issue...



15 million

Americans with food allergies



Includes

5.9 million children (1 in 13)





Prevalence is Growing

- The prevalence of food allergies appears to be on the rise:
 - According to a 2008 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there was about an 18 percent increase in food allergy seen between 1997 and 2007
 - The prevalence of peanut allergy among children appears to have tripled between 1997 and 2008
- In addition, more than 30 percent of children with a food allergy have multiple food allergies

Why is the Prevalence Growing?

- Several unproven theories:
 - Hygiene hypothesis
 - Pre-natal diet/breastfeeding
 - Antibiotic use
 - Reporting bias
 - GMOs



Food Allergies Can Be Life-Threatening

- Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that comes on quickly and may cause death
- Every 3 minutes a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency department
- That equates to 203,000 visits to the emergency room each year – most are due to accidental exposure
- Past reactions do not predict future reactions – so it is important to be prepared with an epinephrine auto-injector, if prescribed



Current Research into Treatments

- FARE supports a number of clinical trials at prestigious institutions across the country that are exploring promising treatments, but these are still under study and not approved for use outside a research setting.
- Three treatments being studied:
 - Oral Immunotherapy (OIT)
 - Sublingual Immunotherapy (SLIT)
 - Food Allergy Herbal Formula 2 (FAHF-2)



FARE Programs

- In addition to our research, our other programs include:

- Food Allergy Awareness Week (May 12-18)
- Food Allergy Conferences
- School Food Allergy Programs: Safe@School, AllergyReady.com
- Teen Programs: Teen Summit, Teen Advisory Group (TAG)

FARE Programs

- Other programs include:
 - Food Industry Day
 - Monday, October 7, 2013
 - Hyatt Dulles Hotel in Herndon, VA
 - Advocacy Initiatives
 - Stock epinephrine
 - EMT carry/use
 - FDA:
 - » Thresholds
 - » Preventive Controls



FDA

■ Thresholds

- Looking at whether it is possible to safely establish threshold levels for major allergens.
- Pros:
 - Clearer direction for industry
 - Less confusion with “may contain” labels
- Cons:
 - No set amount of safe allergen level is known due to widely varying levels of allergenicity.
 - Informed choice is very important to our membership and 65% said they would not buy products even if they could be assured the level would not cause a reaction.

FDA

■ Preventive Controls

- Would improve food safety by reducing the risks from all hazards in manufactured food, including food allergens.
- Part of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (2011)
- Specific requirements for preventing the unintended presence of allergens.
 - Reducing risks of cross-contact
 - Reducing recalled from undeclared food allergens
- Companies would have 1 year after it is published in the Federal Register.
- Comment period will close on September 16.

ServSafe Allergen Awareness Training Program

- Committee Formed in December, 2012
 - Committee members include professionals from corporate food service, restaurants, independent food allergy trainers, physicians and non-profit organizations
 - Some of the companies represented included Food Allergy Research & Resource Program, Chic-Fil-A, Sodexo and the Celiac Foundation. FARE was represented by two staff members, Joel Schaffer (formerly of Disney) and Steve Taylor, who is a member of the FARE Medical Advisory Board.

ServSafe Allergen Awareness Training Program

- Program categories include:
 - Food allergy fundamentals
 - Purchasing, receiving & storing food
 - Preparing & delivering food
 - Customer communication
 - Emergency preparedness



Food Allergy Fundamentals

- What is a food allergy
 - Difference between an allergy & an intolerance
 - Common symptoms and reactions
 - What is anaphylaxis
- What are the “Big 8”?
- How to read a label
 - Laws surrounding labeling
 - How do laws differ between retail and wholesale



Purchasing, Receiving and Storing Food

- How do you vet suppliers
- How to unload food to avoid cross contact
 - Inspect truck and boxes for broken packages or possible spillage
- How to store food to avoid cross contact
 - Designate specific locations for foods containing allergens
 - Carefully label items to avoid confusion

Preparing and Delivering Food

- Cleaning and sanitizing
 - Kitchen surfaces
 - Dishware, flatware, utensils & equipment
 - Tables & Chairs
 - Staff
 - Wash hands, change gloves, change towels, etc.
- Segregate Cooking Equipment
 - Designated pans, cutting boards, knives, etc.
- Meal Completion
 - Meal should be designated as allergen-free and steps must be taken to avoid cross-contact once it leaves the kitchen

Customer Communications

- How to respond to questions
 - Can you accommodate my needs?
 - What policies do you have regarding food allergies?
- How to explain what a restaurant is capable of doing
 - What items on the menu can I eat?
 - What are the ingredients?
 - Can I see the label?
 - What substitutions can you make?
 - How do you avoid cross contact?
- When should the restaurant involve the manager or chef

Emergency Preparedness

- How to identify if a person is having an allergic reaction
- What to do when an allergic reaction occurs
 - Call 911, explain that a person is having an allergic reaction
 - Confirm that the ambulance is carrying epinephrine and that there will be a first-responder on the scene that can administer epi

Program Delivery

- The NRA and FARE are working on PR strategies including targeted mailings, press releases and speaking engagements to promote the program
- The program is expected to be available to restaurants in late summer

FARE Tools

- FARE is developing additional tools for restaurants and customers
- Restaurant Tools and Resources on Website
 - Sample policies
 - Best practices for customer communication
 - Emergency Action Plan
 - Menu suggestions
- Customer Tools and Resources on Website
 - Food Allergy Card
 - Steps on how to identify an appropriate restaurant and how to have a safe dining experience
 - Webinar with Chef Joel Schaefer

Other Restaurant Resources in Progress

- Searchable database for trained restaurants
- Mobile app to search for trained restaurants
- Window sticker indicating that restaurants have been trained
- PSA Campaign (tv, radio and print)
 - Emphasizing the importance of the restaurant/customer communication in ensuring a safe experience

For More Information

FARE

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