

## Onions and Garlic



Although we have #14 Major Allergens to adhere to under the FIR regulations, it is important to understand there are over 250 potential foods that someone can be allergic too, one that we see pop up every now and again is Onion and Garlic which are from the same allium vegetable group.



### Cross re- actions

If someone is allergic to onion, they could find they also react to garlic and vice versa. This is a process known as “cross-reactivity”. Other foods in the same group could also cause a problem including leek, asparagus, scallions, and chives.

Research suggests that the level of cross-reactivity among the different vegetables in this group is likely to vary among individuals. All cases are different, so you would need to discuss this with your customer before preparing their food.

Onion and garlic is used as base ingredients in a wide variety of dishes served in restaurants, takeaways, hotels etc. You also need to consider if they are used in stocks and sauces and then removed from the end product e.g., Mirepoix<sup>1</sup>.

Both foods are common ingredients in Indian and other Oriental foods and widespread in pre-packed foods such as chutneys, processed meats, soups etc. If you are in doubt about any pre-packed product contact the manufacturer or check with your suppliers.

If you have a guest with an onion/garlic allergy read **ALL** ingredient lists carefully before you prepare a dish for someone dining in your establishment. Also be aware of the cooking vessel used and double clean to ensure no traces and rinse thoroughly. Chopping boards and knives will be another potential high-risk issue.

When managing the customer with the onion and garlic allergy ensure a member of the management team (FOH or BOH) speaks directly with the customer to understand fully their request.

When dealing with allergens outside the #14 major allergens, the chain of **COMMUNICATION** is key, to ensure all parties understand fully what is required and what is served.

It is rare for someone in the UK to be allergic to these two foods, however, there are no exact figures available. The Anaphylaxis Campaign membership currently includes four people who appear on their register as allergic to onion and two who are allergic to garlic (June 2018). In addition, one other person is allergic to both. This is out of a total membership of around 3,700 members.

If someone suffers unpleasant symptoms rather than an allergic reaction triggered by onion or garlic, it is possible it may be an intolerance. You should still take care when producing their foods as their health could be affected for a period of time.

The [Anaphylaxis Campaign](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk) produces numerous fact sheets on food allergens on their website for those with allergies; these can be found by following this link [www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/hcp/what-is-anaphylaxis/fact-sheets/](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/hcp/what-is-anaphylaxis/fact-sheets/)

<sup>1</sup> Mirepoix is a flavour base made from diced vegetables cooked—usually with butter, oil, or other fat—for a long time on low heat without colouring or browning.