

# ALLERGENS

## What are they?

Food allergens are food ingredients that may cause an allergic reaction in certain individuals. The allergens most common to dairy products include lactose, fruit, nuts and their oils and extracts.

## How severe can the reactions be?

Allergic reactions may vary depending on the allergen and the individual involved. Reactions can be very mild. However, some reactions can be immediate and life threatening. Individuals susceptible to severe reaction must carry an antidote at all times.

## What dairy products are of most concern?

Products containing nuts and their extracts and oils will cause severe reaction in sensitive individuals. Very small amounts, even dust particles, can initiate severe reactions.

## How do sensitive people protect themselves?

People with allergies rely on accurate ingredient listings to determine if a food is safe for them to eat. As such, the ingredient listing must accurately reflect the product formulations.

## Will listings guarantee safety?

No! Good manufacturing practices must be followed to ensure that allergens are not accidentally added to a dairy product. The following practices have resulted in allergic reaction:

- cross-contamination of product through improper cleaning of surfaces and utensils.
- use of equipment that is not easily cleaned (flat edges and porous conveyor belts).
- putting product in the wrong package.

- using mixed packaging materials from suppliers.
- using mixed ingredients, particularly nuts, from suppliers.
- using rework containing potential allergens in another product.

## What steps can be taken to prevent contamination?

- do not rework nut ice creams into other products.
- visually inspect all equipment that may contact nuts after it is cleaned.
- clearly identify or colour code boxes of nuts, especially those coated in chocolate, upon receipt.
- contents of boxes of nuts should be visually examined for 'blends' before being added to the product.
- ensure that ingredient listings are correct and up to date.

For further information contact the  
Dairy Plant Specialist at  
Food Protection Services

(604) 660-5357

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