

Gloucester City Council

Environmental Health Factsheet

NUTS CAN BE FATAL

Studies suggest that approximately two in every 100 people may experience allergic reactions to particular foods.

A small number of these people are unfortunate enough to suffer from a very severe allergy to nuts. Peanuts and their products (e.g. oil, butter) are the usual culprits, but other nuts are also implicated.

A tiny amount of the nut can have rapid and fatal effects on the sufferer unless medical help is obtained very quickly. Obviously, through prior knowledge to when foods contain nut based ingredients, they can be avoided by sufferers.

Therefore, caterers and food manufacturers need to share such information with the public, especially as there are occasions when the presence of nuts or their products are not stated on the food label, if indeed it is labelled. Unlabelled foods from catering outlets cause the most problems, however, there are things that people who produce or serve such food can do to help:

- **Run a food business?** - as owner or manager, make sure your staff are aware of the significance of the use of nuts and nut products - through training sessions, notices, in-house journals etc.
- **Use nuts or nut oils in a recipe?** - ask whether a susceptible customer will be able to identify them. If their presence is not clear from the ingredients list or the name of the food or its presentation, find other ways and means of passing the information down the food distribution chain to the point of sale to the customer; why not label it "contains peanuts"?
- **Use nuts or nut oils in replacement or substitution for more general ingredients?** - make even more certain that this is known down the food distribution chain.



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- **Are you a chef or a cook?** - remember that cooking in nut oil or groundnut oil can be the equivalent of using nut products as an ingredient and, again, pass information down the food distribution chain. Remember also that any oil that has previously been used to cook products containing nuts can carry minute traces of nut proteins and so have the same effect as nut oils.
- **Are you a catering supplier?** - make sure that your customers know which products may contain nuts (and tell them not to throw the packaging away without reading the label first!)
- **Are you a restaurateur or a caterer?** - check the complete recipes of all your products so that you can answer questions if asked.
- **Do customers ask you if there are nuts in a food and you don't know?** - tell them to try something else. If you can't offer them anything, tell them to try somewhere else.