

Preparing safe food for someone with an allergy

If your activity does not need to be registered as a food business, you don't have to provide information for consumers about allergens present in the food as ingredients. However, we strongly recommend that you do so as best practice.

Food allergens cannot be removed by cooking, so it is important that they are managed carefully. The following advice is our guide to best practice when you prepare food, keeping in mind those people with food allergies:

- Double check ingredients listed on pre-packed foods for allergens
- When making foods, clean work surfaces and equipment thoroughly using hot, soapy water to ensure traces of anything you may have cooked before are removed
- Keep a note of the ingredients used in your dish to share with those running the event
- If someone is allergic to something, simply taking it off their plate isn't enough. Even a tiny trace can be enough to cause an allergic reaction
- Provide allergen information to the people attending the event
- Follow advice for [avoiding cross-contamination](#) in the kitchen

If you are unsure whether or not you should be registered, you should speak to your local authority's [Environmental Health department](#). They will be able to advise you regarding signage requirements & general allergen guidance.

4. Cooking and preparation

Barbecues

When you're barbecuing, the biggest risk of food poisoning is from raw and undercooked meat. But following a few simple tips can keep your barbecued food safe and tasty:

- Wash hands after touching raw meat and before handling other food or equipment
- Check the centre of the food – meat isn't necessarily cooked inside just because it looks charred on the outside, use a food thermometer to check the core temperature is 75°C
- Make sure chicken, pork, burgers, sausages and kebabs are cooked all the way through
- If you don't have a food thermometer check there is no pink meat, and juices run clear
- To help cook food thoroughly cook the meat indoors (in a pan, grill or oven), then finish it off on the barbecue for that chargrilled flavour
- Even if people are waiting for food don't reduce the cooking times, serving undercooked meat can give people food poisoning
- Frozen food should be completely thawed before you start to cook it
- Keep raw meat in sealed containers, separate from other foods. That way it won't contaminate them with bacteria
- Use separate plates and utensils for raw meat to avoid cross-contamination with ready-to-eat foods such as bread rolls and salads
- Don't use a sauce or marinade for cooked food that's had raw meat in it
- When the charcoal is glowing red with a powdery grey surface, it's ready for you to start cooking
- Keep food moving on the barbecue, so it cooks evenly

Buffets

Many foods included in a buffet, such as cold meats and sandwich fillings, require chilling and should be left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible and for no more than four hours. After this time, any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge. If you put the food back in the fridge don't let it stand around at room temperature when you serve it again.

All foods which are to be held hot prior to serving must be kept above 63°C. These foods should be placed in appropriate equipment, for example a pre-heated bain-marie/hot cabinet, as soon as possible after reheating or cooking. Once food has been cooked, if you want to re-heat it for an event it should be chilled as quickly as possible and refrigerated before being re-heated to 82°C. However this is not required of food that would be spoiled by reheating to this level. Remember food should only be reheated once.

Cakes and baked goods

You can serve homemade cakes at community events. They should be safe to eat as long as:

- The people who make them follow good food hygiene advice
- Keep a note of the allergen ingredients
- Make sure that cheesecake and any other cakes or desserts containing fresh cream are left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible
- When handling cakes use tongs or a cake slice
- Store cakes in a clean, sealable container, away from raw foods, somewhere cool and dry
- children can take part in food preparation at charity and community events, but it is very important that they have adequate supervision and good hygiene practices are followed

Using jam jars

It is safe to re-use glass jam jars to supply home-made jam or chutney as long as the jars are free from chips and cracks and are properly washed, and sterilised prior to each use. Well-fitting lids will also minimise any hygiene risks to the food in the jars.

Food transportation

- Food should be transported in clean suitable containers
- Any foods being transported should be kept out of the fridge for the shortest time possible
- Use cool boxes to transport food that should be kept cool



5. Who to contact

Local authority food safety team

If you any questions or concerns, please get in touch with your local authority food safety team:

[foodstandards.gov.scot/contact-us/local-authorities](https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/contact-us/local-authorities)

Food Standards Scotland

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