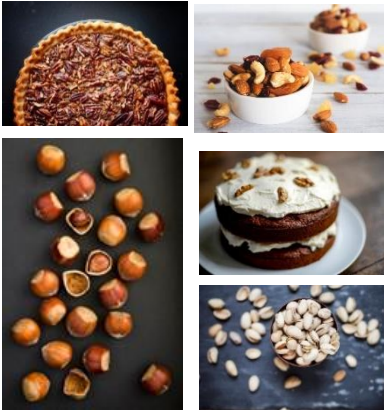


Identifying Allergens: Tree Nuts

Retail Food Establishments – Food Safety



Millions of people have food allergies, and those numbers appear to be rising. Reactions generally occur within minutes or hours of eating a product that is, or a product that contains a food allergen. Even small amounts of a food identified as an allergen could **result in symptoms that range from mild to life-threatening**.

R.61-25, Chapter 3, Section 3-602.11 requires labeling of grab-and-go foods and bulk customer self-service foods in a retail food establishment. Along with listing all ingredients in these foods, the label must clearly identify all major food allergens in the product.

Labeling does not apply to table service or foods packaged for a to-go order. Customers with allergy concerns may ask

questions about ingredients, or how a product is cooked or prepared. As a person-in-charge, a server, or other food staff you play an important role in helping the customer make informed decisions about their food choices.

Below is a review of one of the major food allergens.

TREE NUTS

What are tree nuts? Simply, they are nuts that grow on trees. The common tree nuts used in food preparation are:

- Almonds,
- Pecans,
- Cashews,
- Walnuts,
- Pistachios,
- Macadamia nuts,
- Chestnuts,
- Hazelnuts,
- Brazil nuts and pine nuts.

A person may be allergic to one or more tree nuts, but not all tree nuts. Because of this, the specific tree nut(s) added to a product must be included on the food label. It is also important to be aware of any dishes served in the facility that include tree nuts.

In some dishes, like those pictured above in the top left, it is easy to see the tree nuts. Some dishes include the tree nuts used in the recipe as a part of its name, making it easy to identify the potential allergen. Pecan pie, anyone?

However, there are some baked goods (e.g., Cakes, cookies, breads, pastries, pies), cereals (hot and cold), sauces (e.g., Pad Thai, romesco, pesto, salsa di noci – “noci” translated means walnuts), salad dressings, frozen desserts, candies, beverages (e.g. Specialty coffees, smoothies) and plant-based protein meat replacements (e.g., burgers, meatballs, chicken) that may contain tree nuts in the ingredients that are not as easy to identify by sight or name of the product.

Some allergens in foods may not be obvious, for example those:

- Cooked in a tree nut cooking oil.
- Prepared using a tree nut flour.
- Prepared using finely chopped, crushed, or blended tree nuts.
- Processed in a food plant that is also used to process foods that contain tree nuts. Therefore, it is possible that traces of the allergen may be present while processing foods that do not have tree nuts in the recipe.

Although called a nut the peanut is a legume. It grows in the ground not on a tree. A person with a tree nut allergy could also be allergic to peanuts, but they may not be.

Additional information and guidance on **Major Food Allergens** may be found in [Regulation 61-25, Retail Food Establishments](#), Chapter 1, Section 1-201.10(B)(64) and the Conference of Food Protection [CFP -Major Food Allergen Framework](#).

