

Food Allergies and Special Diets Notification

This handout is intended for all Older American Act clients in the Nutrition Program (i.e. Congregate and Home Delivered Meals) to inform individuals of the risk of cross contamination between ingredients for those with a known (diagnosed by a Medical Doctor, such as an Allergist) or unknown food allergy and for those with medical diagnoses that would benefit from a medically tailored meal.

What are the 8 Major Food Allergens?¹

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA) identifies eight foods or food groups as the major food allergens. They are as follows:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish (e.g., bass, flounder, cod)
- Crustacean shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp)
- Tree Nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans)
- Peanuts
- Wheat
- Soybeans
- Any food ingredients that contain these proteins.

This does not include highly refined oils (e.g. peanut oil or soybean oil) derived from the foods listed above or ingredients exempt under the petition or notification process specified in the federal Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-282).

What is Cross Contact?²

Cross-contact occurs when one food comes into contact with another food and their proteins mix. Each food then contains small amounts of the proteins in the other food. Often it is so small that it usually cannot be seen. This small amount of food protein can cause reactions in people with food allergies! Based on how food items are mixed and prepared, the meals provided to you in the nutrition program cannot be guaranteed to be completely free of any food allergen.

Please note that in most cases, it may not be safe to serve the nutrition program's regular meals to a person with a physician documented life-threatening food allergy due to the risk of unknown ingredients and cross-contact.

Note: It is the client's responsibility to review the weekly menu and bring any allergy concerns to the attention of the nutrition provider. When feasible, the provider will supply a special meal to meet the dietary needs of the client.

Will I receive special meals for a medical diagnosis such as heart disease or diabetes?

The meals served in the Older American Act nutrition program (i.e. Congregate and Home Delivered Meals) must follow the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meet a minimum of 33.33% of the Dietary Reference Intakes for each meal. This includes minimums for nutrients such as Protein and Carbohydrates and limits for nutrients such as sodium and total fat. However, some individuals would benefit from further diet modifications tailored to their specific needs. **When feasible, the provider will supply a special meal to meet the dietary needs of the client.**