

Reporting an allergic reaction - a survey for people living with food allergy

**Why is the Food Standards Agency carrying out this survey?**

* The FSA is a non-ministerial government department and our job is to use our expertise and influence so that people can trust that the food they buy and eat is safe and what it says it is. The survey is funded by the Food Standards Agency.
* Almost 2% of adults and 8% of children in the United Kingdom have a food allergy but allergic reactions to food from commercial and institutional premises often go unreported[[1]](#footnote-1).
* We are carrying out this research to get a better understanding about what is needed to improve reporting allergic reactions for people living with food allergies.
* This survey is being conducted by Notbinary on behalf of the FSA.

**Who is the survey for?**

* You can complete the survey if you are over 16 years of age and have a food allergy, or you can complete it on behalf of your child who has a food allergy or on behalf of another person that has a food allergy.
* Please only take this survey if you have a food allergy as food intolerance is not covered in this study[[2]](#footnote-2).
* This survey is voluntary and you are free to exit at any point.

**What will the survey involve?**

* This survey asks about your experiences of reporting allergic reactions to food. It shouldn’t take more than 5-10 minutes to complete.

If you have any problems completing this survey, please email ‘fsadigital@food.gov.uk’

**We will not ask you for any personal data;**

* The only personal details that we will be collecting are your age range and country of residence. This is to help us differentiate between any participants residing outside of the United Kingdom. You will not be identifiable from the information you provide.
* For further information on how FSA handles the information you have shared with us, please see our privacy policy on our website  <https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/privacy-policy>

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**Q1. About you**

W 1.1 Who are you filling out the survey for?

* Myself - I have a food allergy

I am a parent / care-giver of a child who has a food allergy

I care for an adult with a food allergy

* I’m responding on behalf of someone with a food allergy that I am not caring for
* What is your relationship to this person? (free text)

Note - If you are completing this survey for someone else, please complete the survey as the person reporting an allergic reaction on their behalf.

**Q.2 About the person with the allergy:**

2.1 What is the country of residence of the person living with the allergy?

* England
* Wales
* Scotland
* Northern Ireland
* Other

Which country are you a resident of? (free text)

2.2 What is the age range of the person living with the allergy?

<8 years; 8-12 years; 13-17 years; 18-25; 26-35; 36-49; 50-65; 66+

2.3 Has the food allergy been diagnosed by a medical professional (such as a GP, a

hospital, or by an allergy specialist)?

* Yes
* No
* Don’t know

2.4 Which of the following foods causes the person living with the allergy to have an allergic reaction? [Please choose all that apply]

* Celery
* Cereals containing gluten – including wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan), rye, barley and oats
* Crustaceans – such as prawns, crabs and lobsters
* Eggs
* Fish
* Lupin
* Milk
* Molluscs – such as mussels and oysters
* Mustard
* Tree nuts – including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
* Peanuts
* Sesame seeds
* Soybeans
* Sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if they are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million)
* Other

If ‘Other’ please specify below. (free text)

**Q3. Reporting an allergic reaction to food**

3.1 Have you ever reported an allergic reaction to food before?

* Yes

Can you tell us more about the last allergic reaction to food you reported?

* + - Who did you report it to? (free text)
    - How was the experience of reporting it? (free text)
    - Were you happy with the outcome? (free text)
    - What motivated you to report it? (free text)
    - How long after the reaction did you report it? (free text)
* No
  + Is there any reason for this? (free text)
  + Is there anything that would motivate you to report an allergic reaction in the future? (free text)
  + Did you know that you could report an allergic reaction to food?
  + Yes
    - Who would you report it to? (free text)
  + No
  + ~~Don’t know~~

3.2 Would you report an allergic reaction in any of the following situations?

a. After reacting to something eaten in a restaurant or

takeaway;

Yes - regardless of the symptoms

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

Yes – but only if the symptoms were severe

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

No

* Is there any reason why not? (free text)

b. After reacting to eating ~~something you ate in~~ a takeaway ordered through a

delivery service such as Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Just Eat or similar;

Yes - regardless of the symptoms

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

Yes – but only if the symptoms were severe

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

No

* Is there any reason why not? (free text)

c. After reacting to something eaten at home that was bought from

a shop selling packaged food e.g. a supermarket;

Yes - regardless of the symptoms

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

Yes – but only if the symptoms were severe

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

No

* Is there any reason why not? (free text)

d. After reacting to something eaten from a market stall;

Yes - regardless of the symptoms

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

Yes – but only if the symptoms were severe

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

No

* Is there any reason why not? (free text)

e. After reacting to eating a food that was sold loose (no sealed packaging) from a shop e.g. a pie.

Yes - regardless of the symptoms

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

Yes – but only if the symptoms were severe

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

No

* Is there any reason why not? (free text)

f. After reacting to something eaten from a public institution e.g. school,

university or work canteen?

Yes - regardless of the symptoms

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

Yes – but only if the symptoms were severe

* Who would you report it to? (free text)

No

* Is there any reason why not? (free text)

3.3 How likely would you be to report almost eating something you / they thought was safe to eat but then realised before it was eaten that it contained a food you / they are allergic to?

* Likely
* Neither likely nor unlikely
* Not likely
* Is there any reason why not? (free text)

3.4 What would be your main reason for wanting to report an allergic food reaction?

(free text)

3.5 Would you expect to have an outcome from reporting an allergic food reaction?

* Yes
* What would you expect it to be? (free text)
* No
* Not sure

3.6 What would be your preferred method of reporting an allergic reaction?

* Making a phone call
* Sending an email
* Using an allergic reporting app or website
* Writing a letter

**Q4. Sharing your personal information**

4.1 How comfortable would you be to share the following information when reporting an

allergic reaction?

(Your information would be held securely according to information data standards and

would only be used in a service that seeks to limit and prevent future allergic food

reactions from occurring).

Select the options you wouldn’t mind sharing;

* Your name
* Age range of the person living with an allergy
* Your email address
* Your postcode
* Ethnicity of the person living with an allergy
* Gender of the person living with an allergy
* Language of the person reporting the allergy
* Your telephone number
* Symptoms of the person living with an allergy
* Where the food causing the allergic reaction was eaten
* What food was eaten

4.2 If someone needed to contact you for more information when investigating your report

of an allergic reaction to food, would you be comfortable in being contacted?

* Yes

What would you preferred method of contact be?

* Call
* Text
* Email
* Other (please specify)
* No

Any particular reason for this? (free text)

* Don’t know

4.3 How important is it for you to be informed about any potential outcome of your report of

an allergic reaction to food?

* Very important
* Somewhat important
* Neither important nor unimportant
* Not very important
* Not at all important

**Q5.** **Managing the allergy**

5.1 Which of the following statements best describes you (or the person living with an allergy)?

* I’m extremely vigilant about what I eat / they’re extremely vigilant about what they eat.
* I’m somewhat vigilant about the food I eat / they are somewhat vigilant about the food they eat.
* I’m not as vigilant as I’d like to be about the food I eat / they are not as vigilant as they’d like to be about the food they eat.
* I’m not very vigilant about the food I eat / they are not very vigilant about the food they eat.
* Is there anything you’d like to tell us about your answer above? (free text)

5.2 How would you describe the impact of the allergy on the person living with the allergy?

* The allergy causes me / them a lot of stress and often feels limiting in my / their life. I / they live my life around my / their allergy.
* My / their allergy feels manageable, I / they don’t think about it too often and it doesn’t impact my / their life too much.
* My / their allergy does affect me / them but I’m / they’re prepared to take some risks about it and try not to think about it too much.

5.3 Which of the following is true for you? Please select all that apply

* I know a lot about my / their allergy and how to manage it
* I have heard of the Food Standards Agency
* I would seek allergy information from the Food Standards Agency
* I know of at least one allergy charity in the UK
* I’m a member of an allergy charity in the UK
* I’m a member of an online allergy group on social media
* My school / university / workplace is aware of my allergy

5.4 When staying informed about the allergy(s), please rank the following from 1 (most used) to 5 (least used). If your response is N/A, please choose 0.

* My GP or allergy specialist
* The news and media
* Online allergy groups I belong to
* A charity I am a member of or seek out for information
* Websites I find online

1. <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fifth-csa-report-allergy%20(1).pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. food allergy is an unusual adverse immune response to food that usually occurs very soon after consumption that can lead to various symptoms throughout the body. Food intolerance does not involve the immune system and mainly affects the gut. for more information, please see link in footnote 1 above [↑](#footnote-ref-2)