We all know that grocery shopping can be time-consuming. Now imagine if you or someone close to you have a dietary restriction in form of a food allergy. Searching through the endless number of aisles at a grocery store and reading label after label on the lookout for new products that do not contain any ingredients you are allergic to takes up a huge amount of time. Some might not even be comfortable standing in the store reading all these labels in fear of judgmental looks from bystanders. A survey conducted by our team showed that 7 out of 10 people with food allergies feel like they are spending too much time when grocery shopping and wish to reduce the time spent searching for safe products.

With further restrictions such as reduced eye sight or difficulties reading small texts for instance, the task becomes even harder and close to impossible. If you have these restrictions, you might be stuck with only purchasing products you are already familiar with, thus reducing your opportunities to discover new and exciting dishes that you may not be allergic to.

Making sure that you do not ingest something you are allergic to, especially if you have severe food allergies is of great importance. Overseeing some of the ingredients is a constant risk, especially if you are stressed or in a rush, and the consequences can be severe.

# Why Allergy Checker?

After conducting a survey which consisted of interviewing 20 people we discovered that the individuals with food allergies spend on average 15 minutes more than someone with no food restrictions when shopping new products; most of this time is spent on reading nutritional labels.

Our goal is to reduce the time-consuming aspect of grocery shopping with food allergies, giving the user an easier time when shopping new products, thus allowing the user to safely purchase products knowing that it does not contain anything he/she might be allergic to.

We are proud to present Allergy Checker, a simple, user friendly and accessible application that allows everyone to buy safe food products easily and efficiently, and make it easier to do grocery shopping with food restrictions.

# How it works

Every single product that you can find in any grocery shop has its unique barcode. These barcodes are stored in a database which connects each barcode to its designated product. The barcodes enable us to get all the information about which ingredients are within the desired product.

The application allows you to specify which ingredients you wish to avoid, simply by checking these off. Then using the camera on your phone, you simply scan the barcode. The application then automatically pulls the product from the database and runs through the ingredients checking if the product contains any of the ingredients or traces of these. This completely removes the need to personally search through the nutritional label.

If you wish, you can create an Allergy Checker account which will give you numerous benefits. For instance, you will be able to communicate with other users of the app with whom you will be able to exchange tips and tricks about which food products to buy or avoid. You will also be able to see what kind of ingredients other users are allergic to. This is great when you are planning a dinner with someone; it will give you guidance for what kind of dishes you will want to avoid preparing.

Our team of experts is constantly on the lookout for new food products emerging on the market, that contain known allergens. So, whenever a product comes out that contains something you are allergic to, the app will notify you of that, so that you do not accidentally buy a product that is unsafe for you. This goes only for the allergens that you have specified for yourself; if you update your list of allergens, the notifications you receive will always reflect your updated list.

Interacting with the app gets much more practical with the ability to integrate it with smartwatches. Whether you have an iOS or an Android smartwatch, Allergy Checker will be able to incorporate itself with it. This way, you will be able to receive the notifications you would normally receive – alerts about new allergens, or a message, if you have an account – without the need to check your phone every time.

We are constantly working on improving the app to make it even easier for you to do your grocery shopping. Since the entire Allergy Checker project is new, we would very much appreciate your feedback on the app. Therefore, feel free to get in touch with us by e-mail or by following us on your favorite social media. We would also appreciate it if you recommend us to your friends. All in all, we really hope Allergy Checker will relieve you of many everyday struggles if you have food allergies.