

FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT IN HOSPITALS

ABSTRACT

Background: The National Allergy Strategy (NAS) food service in hospitals project aims to optimise food allergy (FA) management. Stakeholder engagement indicated that institutions such as hospitals require FA policies, protocols and staff training to ensure appropriate food service for patients with food allergy. To support safe practices and to identify where errors are occurring, appropriate and robust audit processes are required. Currently, there is no legislative or accreditation requirement for hospitals to have FA policies and protocols in place.

Method: The NAS engaged with key stakeholders to identify resource needs to enable the provision of appropriate food for patients with FA in the hospital setting. A working group comprising key stakeholder representation was established to oversee resource development.

Results: The project has developed and piloted a standardised FA policy template, protocol and audit tool that can be customised to individual health facilities. These easy to access resources will assist health facilities in being compliant with accreditation standards and the Food Standards Code. In addition, a food allergen substitute table and a FA menu assessment tool for use by dietitians were also developed.

Discussion: The resources will be freely accessible and can be customised to individual institutions. The free downloadable FA menu assessment tool for dietitians working with vulnerable populations, developed in partnership with the Dietitians Association of Australia, will enable dietitians to support safe and nutritionally adequate food provision for people with FA in these settings. It is anticipated that these resources can be adapted for use with other vulnerable populations (e.g. aged care, correctional facilities and other residential settings).

PROJECT AIM

To optimise food allergy management in hospitals and other institutions with vulnerable populations

RESOURCES DEVELOPED

Food Allergy Menu Assessment Tool

- Dietitians need to be able to assess the appropriateness of ingredient elimination and substitution for menus for vulnerable populations, from a nutritional and food safety perspective
- The food allergy menu assessment tool is designed to enable dietitians to undertake comprehensive menu assessments when substituting menu items to accommodate food allergies
- This resource has been developed with the DAA and will be a DAA endorsed resource

Food allergy policy template

- Currently, there is no legislative (or accreditation) requirement for hospitals to have food allergy policies and protocols - this decision is made at a hospital level and is often reactionary
- A standardised food allergy policy template that can be customised to individual hospitals (and other institutions) has been developed to assist hospitals to comply with hospital accreditation standards and the Food Standards Code

Food allergy audit tool template

- Appropriate and robust audit processes should be in place to ensure safe practices and to identify where errors are occurring and protocols and procedures changed where required
- A food allergy audit tool template has been developed to assist with food allergy management at every stage of food service from ordering supplies to delivering the meal to the patient

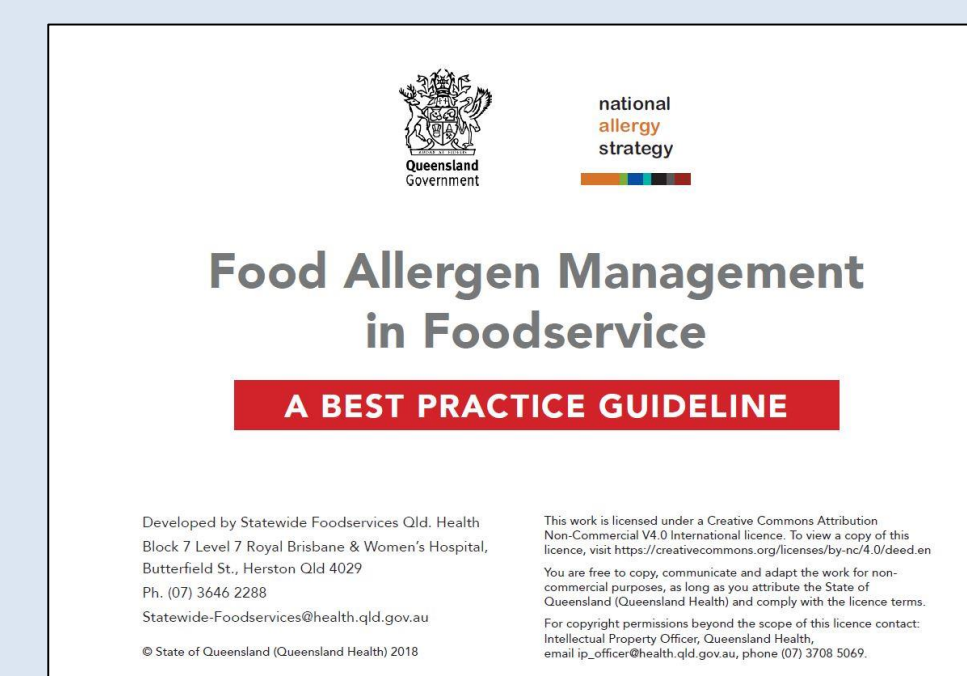
Food allergen ingredient substitution list

- A list of substitute ingredients for food allergens has been developed as well as potential food allergens in the substitute ingredients

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

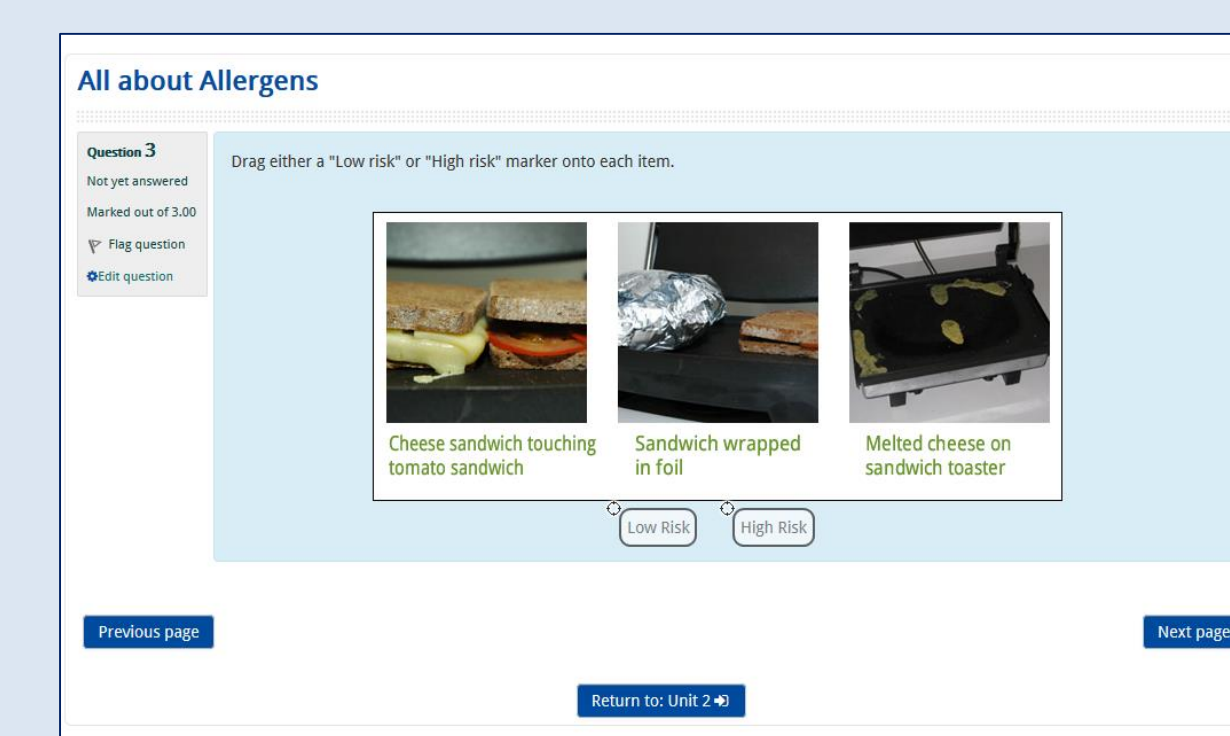
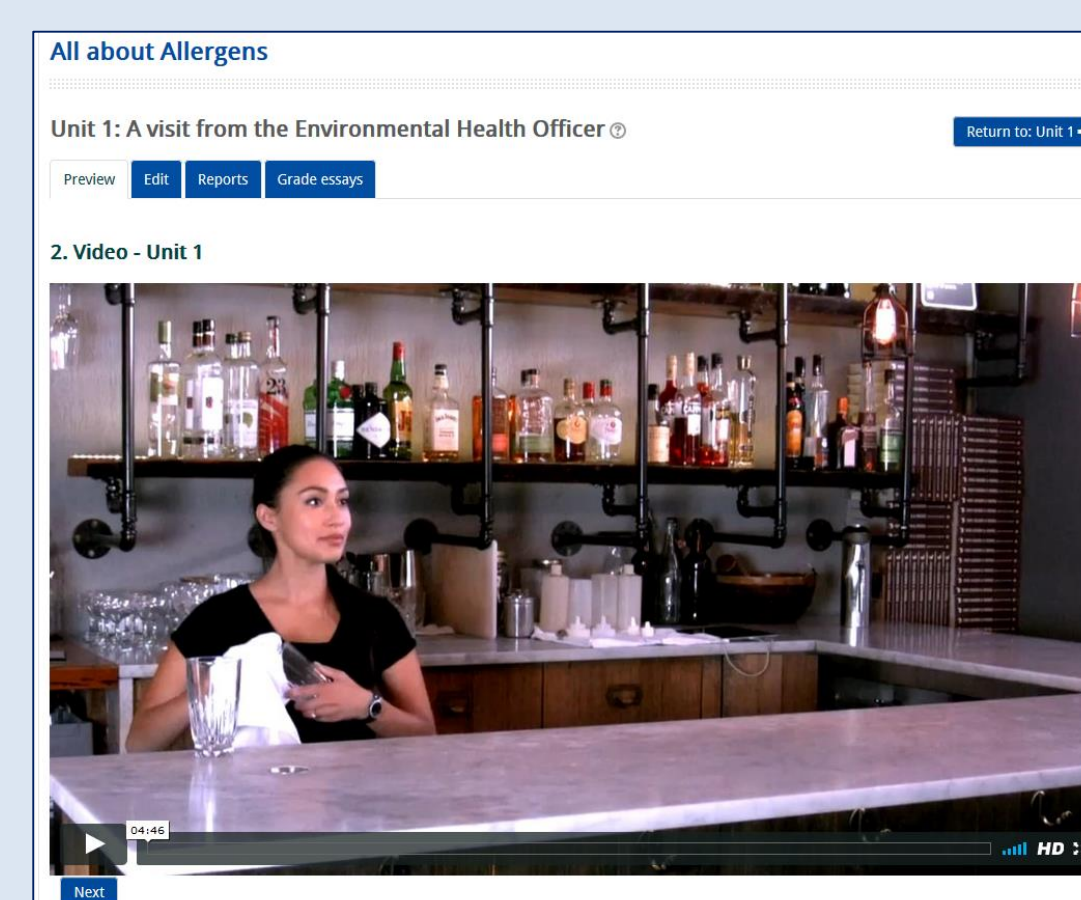
Best practice guideline

- Queensland Health in consultation with the National Allergy Strategy developed a Best Practice Guideline to assist hospitals in providing a safe food service for patients with food allergy
- The Best Practice Guideline supports the National Allergy Strategy food allergy and intolerance policy and audit tool templates



Training

- Undertaking training in food allergy management is strongly recommended to support the use of the resources.
- **All about Allergens** online training has been developed by the National Allergy Strategy for use by anyone working in food service including hospital staff and dietitians
- The training was developed in consultation with key stakeholders and is available free of charge from www.foodallergytraining.org.au
- A certificate of completion can be saved and printed once the final quiz is successfully completed
- The training website provides an information hub with free downloadable resources and links to credible websites



- **ASCIA food allergy e-training for dietitians** is available free of charge for all dietitians: <https://etrainingdiet.ascia.org.au/>

The National Allergy Strategy is working with the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care to distribute and promote these resources.

The National Allergy Strategy is an initiative of the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA)

For further information visit the National Allergy Strategy website: www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au
 Or contact the National Allergy Strategy Coordinator: sandra@allergy.org.au