Protecting consumers from food allergens - What else is required?

May contain labelling to indicate the possible presence of non-ingredient allergens in foods on sale has been in place for 20 years. Studies indicate that it is both over and under-used. Decision-making about when to use it and what form it should take is still variable. Analytical tools to support its use are more widely available but depend on the competence of the laboratory to handle different food matrices as well as the method(s) available for the particular allergen. Regulatory alignment and consumer/patient trust depend on a wide range of complex co-factors. These include: The availability of relevant, accessible and practical analytical methods for food allergens in different food matrices; variability in allergic reactions as well as the amount of allergen triggering different symptom; social and political factors behind regulation - consumer expectations and stakeholder commitment and; understanding and supporting the information needs of all 'food audiences' – including all those who prepare food for others.

Biography

Hazel Gowland is well-known as a food allergic champion consumer, patient representative, researcher and trainer. She has worked for and with the Anaphylaxis Campaign since 1994 and as an independent expert adviser - Allergy Action (www.allergyaction.org ) since 2000. In partnership with world-leading clinicians, food industry bodies, regulators, scientists and social scientists, consumer and patient organisations, she continues to investigate fatal and ‘near miss’ reactions, contributing to improved understanding of allergy risks and how they can be reduced and controlled, both in those people at risk and by those managing their environments and their food.

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