

# ASDA

## INCLUSIVE EATING: FEEDING ALL THE FAMILY





# Introduction



## The way we eat is changing and so must we!

With 60%<sup>1</sup> of British households now having a member of the family with a specific dietary preference or need, it's time we all raise our forks in support of every diet – especially as kids head back to school.

With the start of a new school year, we're faced with new scenarios, new teachers, new friends, and new challenges of broaching the discussion of dietary requirements and ensuring our kids are safe when they reach for a lunchbox snack or head to someone's else's house before or after school.

From coeliac disease to anaphylactic allergies, parents have a lot to think about, so at Asda we want to ensure you're armed and ready to cater for everyone. We're committed to helping you understand it's not about what people can't eat, it's about what they can...and that's much more than you might think!

For the 67% of parents relying on new friends to look after kids during playdates, parties and general childcare<sup>2</sup>, we understand how important it is to trust they will be fine and happy eating away from home.

Kids going back to school should be a time for fun, filled with sleepovers, parties, playdates and excursions, and a relief for parents after the long summer holidays. It shouldn't be a time for anxiety and worry – that's why we're committed to championing inclusivity, helping educate the nation on how to cook for those with dietary requirements (avoiding things like cross-contamination). It's also a time to understand the hundreds of delicious meals they can cook for everyone to enjoy, and ensuring everyone is confident looking after those with a special diet.



In this guide, you'll find information on what sort of questions to ask other parents when it comes to what kids can eat, practical information on what the differences between an allergy and an intolerance are, a whole range of helpful tips and tricks on cooking for those with dietary requirements, and kitchen hacks to help make everything from parties to playdates as inclusive as possible.

Joanna

**Joanna Johnson**

Senior Manager Asda Own Brand Innovation

# Background

With one in five now following a specific diet due to an allergy or intolerance<sup>3</sup>, we all need to make sure we're well equipped and clued-up to cater for everyone in the kitchen.

As kids head back to school and you begin relying on friends and family to look after your little ones during playdates, parties and general childcare, anxieties can run high:

- **Parents of kids with allergies or intolerances are anxious their child may be fed something they can't eat**
- **Those looking after others' kids are nervous they'll feed them the wrong thing**
- **Kids, especially those starting a new school, with new friends, are embarrassed to talk about, or forget to mention their allergy/intolerance**

If you're a parent of a child with a dietary requirement, this means the constant worry that wherever your child is, there is the potential for somebody not 'in the know' on any allergies or intolerances to feed them something potentially dangerous.

Similarly, if you're the one taking care of others' kids, you'll naturally worry over what you're giving them to eat, or you'll hit a roadblock when it comes to cooking a meal that works for everyone.

It's estimated that in the UK, 5-8% of kids have a proven food allergy<sup>4</sup>, with three-quarters of Brits believing their classrooms have up to five kids with a specific dietary requirement<sup>5</sup>. Whilst 65% of Brits are confused about what a child with food allergies or requirements can eat<sup>6</sup>, we should be focusing on everything these kids can eat, and how we can cook with everyone in-mind, ensuring there's something for all to enjoy.

And it's not just allergies and intolerances to think of! As we meet new people, we're having to think about lifestyle choices like vegetarian and vegan diets, or those whose meals are influenced by religious beliefs.

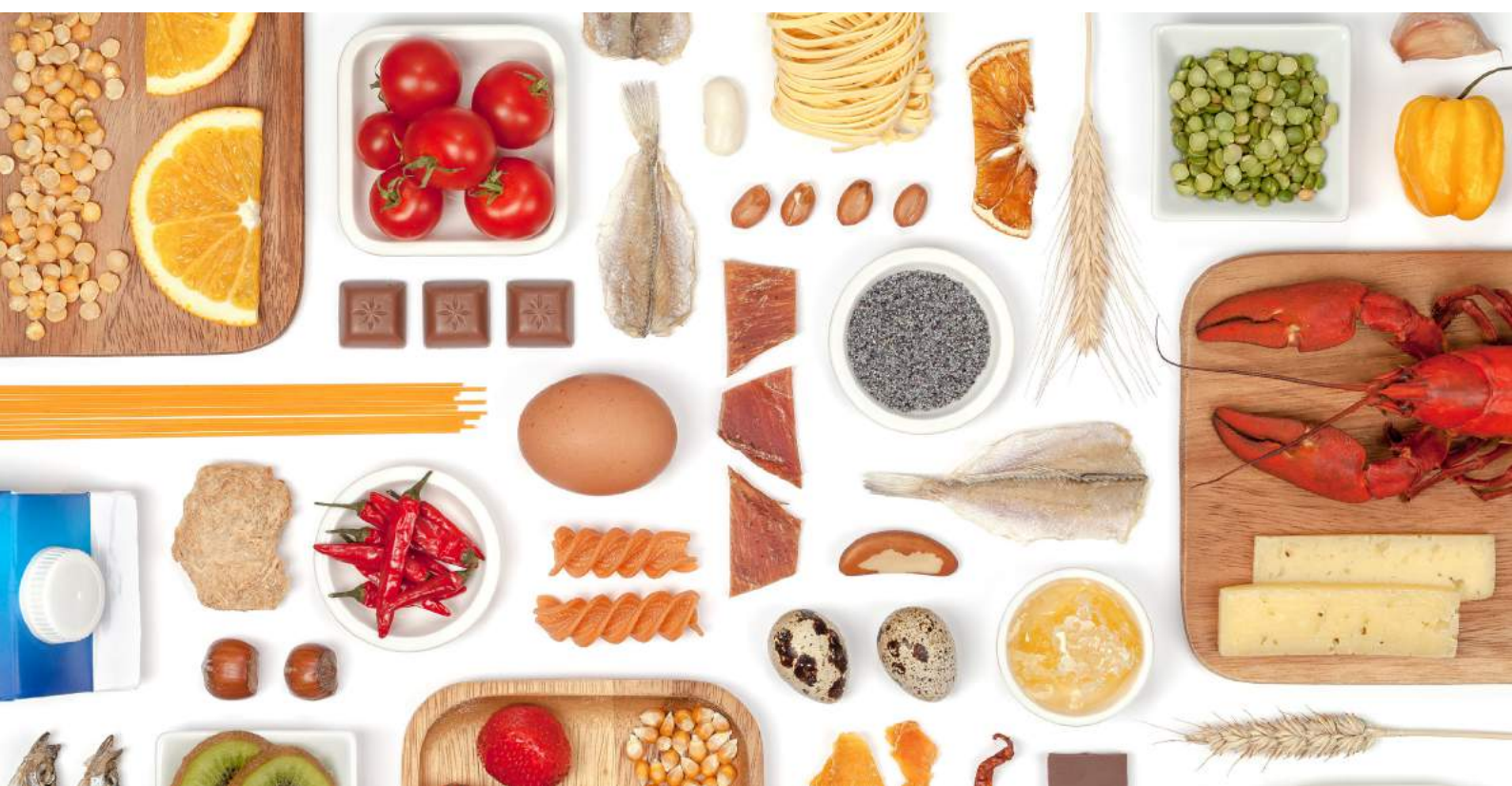
To help with this guide, we've worked with three parenting bloggers, each with a child requiring a special diet. These parents, each with a different story to tell, are advocates for inclusive eating, meaning that no child should feel excluded or embarrassed by their dietary requirement.

3. The Grocer, How Free From Sales Surged, August 2017

4. Food Standards Agency, Food Allergy and Intolerance Programme, March 2017

5. Asda research, op. cit

6. ibid.



# Let's meet the team!

## Becky O'Leary

@Will\_We\_Ever\_Eat\_Out Again?



"Will we ever eat out again!?" This was my response to the Doctor's sombre delivery that the results confirmed our 5-year-old wannabe superhero, Peggy, has Coeliac disease. You see, our culinary adventurers were already somewhat hampered by the fact that Chris, my husband, has Crohn's disease and is on a low fibre diet. It turns out that, almost 1 year in, we're surviving (and dare I say it, rather enjoying discovering new recipes and products that cater for our diverse dietary needs).

Like most parents, what we want for Peggy is a life with choice. To not be held back by her dietary needs. To eat out in an environment which is safe. To eat which ever foods she loves wherever she chooses. To educate and inform is the beginning of positive change to promote inclusivity and equality to everyone with dietary needs."

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## Mike Brook

@DaddyFreckle



Mike - aka Daddy Freckle, father of two, influencer of some. My eldest daughter has a dairy and egg anaphylaxis, so my blog was born out of a desire to share what I've learnt and to support others when it comes to life with a child with food allergies.

School can be a difficult and anxiety-provoking time for a child with an allergy, and the parents of a child with allergies. It can also be challenging for parents whose child is in class with someone with allergies, and for the teachers too. It can lead to the child being isolated, not through people being mean, but being worried that they may cause harm. I want to help parents and teachers feel more comfortable and confident in managing allergies in a way that's accessible without judgement.

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## Sophie Skipp

@FeedFelixFast



"When Felix was diagnosed with multiple food allergies (wheat, dairy, soya, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, coconut and some shellfish) at 6 months old, we had to change the way we ate to enjoy meals together. I've found ways to share the same meal around our kitchen table, and for Felix to develop a love of my allergy-friendly food.

Sharing a meal with your family and friends helps you feel connected, and when you're little, like Felix, you just want to be able to tuck in to everything you can see your friends enjoying. With a few tweaks it's so easy to include children like Felix with allergies and intolerances. I want to share some ideas to help - whether it's for your child, guests at a birthday party or having a friend round to play. It's easier to cater for a special diet than you might think!"

But firstly, what is the difference between an allergy and an intolerance? The next section of this guide will help you understand what's what.

# Allergies and Intolerances - what are they!?

When it comes to chatting about allergies and intolerances, do you know what's what? Some people might be lactose intolerant, or anaphylactic to eggs, but you might not be completely sure what that means.

The most important thing to remember is an allergy involves an immune reaction triggered by eating even a small amount of a certain food. An intolerance does not involve the immune system and normally requires eating a reasonable amount of food – causing uncomfortable symptoms such as tummy pain.

Below is a handy guide to the most common allergens and where you might find them:

In kids, the foods that most commonly cause an allergic reaction include<sup>7</sup>:



Milk



Eggs



Peanuts



Tree Nuts  
(such as walnuts, brazil nuts, almonds and hazelnuts)



Fish



Shellfish

Whilst a lot of foods can cause an allergic reaction, these are the big ones to think of when it comes to catering for groups. Other less-common ones include soy, wheat, celery, mustard and sesame – all of which are clearly labelled on pre-packed foods.

These allergens can affect people in different ways. From a skin rash and swelling of the lips, to anaphylaxis – a severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction.

But what about gluten?

When it comes to gluten, there is one main reason people avoid it: coeliac disease.

One in every 100<sup>8</sup> of us is affected by coeliac disease (an autoimmune disease caused by a reaction to gluten). The main symptoms of coeliac disease include:

- **Recurring stomach pain, cramping or bloating**
- **Tiredness**
- **In some cases, sudden or unexpected weight loss**
- **Mouth ulcers**
- **Severe or occasional diarrhoea and /or constipation**
- **Skin rash**
- **Liver abnormalities**

7. NHS Choices

8. Coeliac UK, Coeliac Disease

Some symptoms of coeliac disease may be mistaken as irritable bowel syndrome, so it's wise to have the proper tests done by your doctor to see if it could be coeliac disease.

When it comes to telling the difference between an allergy and an intolerance, the important differences include:

The important differences between an allergy and intolerance include:

- **The symptoms of a food intolerance usually occur over several hours after eating the food**
- **A larger amount of food is needed to trigger an intolerance than an allergy**
- **A food intolerance isn't potentially life-threatening, unlike an allergy**

So, when chatting about your child's diet with other parents at the school gate or sending your little one off to their first sleepover with a new friend, it's important to chat about diets nice and early.

Understanding what allergens are is one thing, but keeping an eye out for them in popular kids' food – especially if you're not used to it – is another challenge.

Products containing one of the 14 main allergens should be listed on the packaging, but school fêtes, bake sales or even kids bringing birthday cake to class could mean hidden allergens.

Some common things to watch-out for are:

Allergen	Where you can find them
 Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cakes</li><li>• Breads</li><li>• Sauces</li></ul>
 Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cakes</li><li>• Mayonnaise</li></ul>
 Shellfish / Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sauces</li></ul>
 Gluten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bread</li><li>• Pasta</li><li>• Cake</li><li>• Sauces</li></ul>
 Soya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sauces</li></ul>

# Back to School: A Recipe for Success

Between juggling homework, sport practice, dance lessons and new friends, the back to school period is already busy, so thinking about dietary requirements shouldn't be an added worry for you.

To help prepare, here are some top practical tips for playdates and packed lunches and what sort of questions to ask other parents.

For friends and family looking after a kid with allergies or intolerances:

**1** The best place to start is by sitting down and looking at everything the kids can eat, rather than what they can't. Check out some of our delicious recipes in the next section of this guide for inspiration

**2** Ask questions! When meeting new parents, ask them what their child likes to eat. That opens-up the conversation, giving you the chance to chat about any foods you should avoid. Also ask what you should do if their child does have an allergic reaction and if they carry a EpiPen, just so you're prepared.

**3** Check what information is available through the school (e.g. if it's a nut-free zone). Some schools have a forum for parents to discuss what their kids can eat, and what to watch-out for.

**4** Label packed lunches with any allergens the food may contain, that way your kids won't share their food with another who may have an allergy.

**5** Check food labels for any "may contain traces of X" notes. If it does, check with the kids' parent whether this is OK for their child to eat.

**6** If a kid does have an allergic reaction to something, know what to do. Read-up on how to use an EpiPen and try not to panic.

**7** When preparing meals, avoid cross-contamination of ingredients by using labelled Tupperware, and make sure you're using a different surface and utensils for preparing foods with allergens.





# Tips and Tricks



For parents of kids with allergies or intolerances, Becky O'Leary, blogger and mum of coeliac, Peggy (6), and wife of Crohn's disease sufferer, Chris, has provided her top tips and hacks for that busy back to school moment.

## **1 Regular dialogue:**

Keep the doors of communication open between you, other parents, the school and any catering companies if relevant. This is vital to encourage a safe, inclusive environment for your little ones. Have a chat with teachers too, so they can make sure the classroom is safe when sharing food or having kids' cookery classes.

## **2 Keep snacks on hand:**

I literally can't travel ten minutes down the road without a gluten free snack for Peggy! After a day at school, it's always good to keep something in your bag for hungry little tummies. Supermarkets are great for tasty Free From treats, so stock-up!

## **3 Plan:**

Back to school is a busy time, and meal prep can take a little more work if cooking for specific dietary needs. There are loads of recipes that work for everyone, without having to make separate sides for each member of the family – just be realistic about what you can do amongst all those extra-curricular activities!

## **4 Flexibility isn't just for yoga:**

Life sometimes throws curveballs. If thrown one, have a few simple, handy recipes stashed which can be cooked easily (frozen food is great for this).

## **5 Slow and steady wins the race:**

If you don't have a slow cooker – get one! When busy getting Peggy ready for school, or to-and-from parties and playdates, cooking can sometimes become an afterthought. With my slow cooker, though, I can pop everything I need in and family mealtimes are made so much simpler – no fuss required!

# Preparing for the ‘Three Ps’: Parties, Playdates and Picnics

Back to school also means diaries start filling with kids’ parties, playdates and picnics. For parents of kids with allergies or intolerances, and for those parents hosting the event, these Ps can often add a fourth P to the mix – panic.

Between organising balloons, keeping the kids entertained and finding that perfect picnic spot, catering for those with a specific dietary requirement may add an extra layer of stress. This stress often means kids with food requirements are missing-out on being invited, with 54%<sup>9</sup> of Brits admitting they’ve avoided sending an invitation to kids with allergies because of the added anxiety catering to their diets adds.

But don’t stress! Being prepared for the Three Ps with every diet in-mind can be simple, ensuring every child has fun and feels included. Here are some simple, handy tips and tricks from our team of parents to help you get prepared.



## For parties...

**RSVP please!** Kids parties start with the invitation, and so should your planning. When asking parents to RSVP, add a line on any dietary require-

ments their kids may have, that way you’re armed with the information you need to make it a fun-filled day for all.

**Have your cake and eat it too:** No party is complete without cake. So everyone can take a slice home with them, try baking a cake free from gluten for any kids with coeliac disease, egg-free for those allergic to egg, and avoid adding nuts for any nut allergies. It’d also be good to get the kids to decorate “Free From” cupcakes, that way they can see that having a food allergy doesn’t mean you can’t have fun!

**Avoid cross contaminating candy:** Avoid cross contamination by using different-coloured party bags or ribbon. That way you’ll know which ones contain sweets appropriate for kids with dietary requirements. Also make sure you’re using different plates and bowls to make sure no allergens cross contaminate.



## For playdates...

**Snack attack:** Snacks at playdates after school are a necessity. Sandwiches using gluten free bread (delicious for all!) are a popular choice, or try serving sandwich fillings on cocktail sticks. Diced ham and pickles, or dairy-free cheese are always nice and simple!

**Contained within containers:** If cooking for the kids, make sure to use labelled containers for “Free From” products, that way you can avoid cross contamination if preparing a dish for a specific dietary requirement. Make sure to also use different cooking utensils, including chopping boards, so as to not transfer allergens onto “Free From” foods.



## For picnics...

**Use your utensils:** When putting on a picnic spread, cross contamination can occur quite easily. Avoid mix-ups by using different coloured or labelled utensils.

**Victory for veg:** Don’t underestimate the humble veg! Vegetables are an easy win for picnics and perfect for little tummies.

When it comes to thinking about what to serve at parties, playdates and picnics, there are loads of simple, tasty snacks to suit a variety of dietary requirements:



**Fruit and veggies:** Perfect for any occasion for those without a fruit/veg allergy, just slice and dice for easy eating



**Plain popcorn:** A great snack, especially for an afternoon of movies



**Frozen chips and potato waffles:**

Ideal for something a little more substantial for the kids. Great if you can get gluten free chip batter for any kids with coeliac disease!



**Sausages:** Most quality sausages are gluten free, so get sizzling for any little meat eaters with coeliac disease!



**Jelly:** Great as a wobbly dessert at kids' parties (before the cake, of course). You can even get vegetarian jelly if necessary.

When buying products for the Three Ps, always make sure to check the label for any hidden allergens, and if making them at home, be sure to avoid cross-contamination by using separate boards, cutlery and crockery.

For all those upcoming parties, playdates and picnics, meringues are always a quick and easy treat to whip-up. For those catering to kids with dietary requirements, here's an easy kitchen hack for making them minus egg whites.

## Asda's Aquafaba Meringues

- For those with egg allergies, chickpeas are your saviour! Use the brine from a can of chickpeas (known as aquafaba) instead of the usual egg whites
- Mix the aquafaba with other usual meringue suspects (icing sugar, cream of tartar and vanilla essence)
- Your aquafaba will look JUST like egg whites once whisked with the other ingredients – soft, fluffy peaks is what you're aiming for!
- If you want to turn your meringues into an Eton mess, minus the allergens, try whipped coconut cream



# Shopping the Aisles

At Asda, we want to help you to think about all the delicious things you can cook for kids with dietary requirements, not focus on the things you can't.

Whilst you can still roam all the aisles when shopping for those with allergies and intolerances, we have a range of tasty "Free From" products, all located in one aisle to make things even easier.

Developed with specific dietary requirements in-mind, we have created the ASDA "Free From" range with hundreds of products to choose from

To make things nice and easy, we've called-out on the front of the pack which allergens are omitted - that way you can see right away if it's something you're after. When shopping elsewhere in the store, check what's written in **bold** in the list of ingredients - those are the 14 major allergens to watch for.

Where necessary, we also include "may contain traces of...", which means that although the allergen isn't present in the actual ingredients of that product, it should be avoided if you have a severe allergy, as there could still be traces in the atmosphere at the factory.

This is usually because they use other allergens elsewhere on the site, or the same manufacturing equipment has been used for allergens in the past.

Aside from the specific "Free From" section, of course there are loads of fresh ingredients that could be used in scratch cooking. If shopping online, we've also made it super easy to navigate dietary requirements with our new simple nutritional filters. Available on all food items on the Asda grocery website, the function matches food allergens and intolerances including nuts, gluten, dairy and lactose, as well as diets and lifestyle choices including vegetarian, vegan, halal and kosher, making it even easier to pick the ingredients you need depending on who you're cooking for.

So, if you're wanting to take a cake for a school fête, but don't want anything with nuts, simply search for cake on the online shopping page, filter-out nuts in the nutrition tab, and voilà! Everything you need for nut-free fun is there at your fingertips.





## But what about keeping things fresh and interesting in the kitchen?

We know it's easy to fall into the habit of cooking the same few dishes on rotation, week-in, week-out, especially those that are simple and work for everyone. Whilst not a bad thing, we want to show how you can add variety to your meals, that are full of flavour and everyone at the table will love.

This rotating recipe habit is relied on even more when kids are going back to school, as parents are time-poor, busy juggling school schedules.

With a quarter of Brits cooking the same three tried and tested recipes every week<sup>10</sup>, our Innovation Chefs, Mark Richmond and Andrew Johnston, have provided a few handy tips on how to cook free from with flair:

**Swap your soy sauce for tamari for a gluten free alternative:** Whilst both soy sauce and tamari are by-products of fermented soybeans, gluten free tamari contains no wheat (soy sauce does), making it perfect for those with coeliac disease.

**Making meringues? Reach for a can of chickpeas:** Looking to make something sweet for those with an egg allergy? Try meringues with a twist, using aquafaba (the juice chickpeas come in) instead of egg white. It can also be frozen for you to use at a later date!

**Egg and milk allergy...try vegan:** If cooking for someone with an egg and milk allergy, you can use 'vegan' as a signpost to products that don't contain milk or egg ingredients. Just double check for any 'may contain milk/egg' disclaimers.

**Dairy-free delights:** When baking, don't forget good old Trex! This dairy-free vegetable fat is lower in saturated fat than butter, and adds an extra lightness to cakes, makes biscuits crispier, and produces perfect puddings...all without any dairy!

**Try a touch of tofu:** For those pre-school breakfasts, swap eggs with tofu for those with an egg allergy. All it takes is some firm or silken tofu, whisked with a pinch of turmeric – perfect for fluffy pre-school scramble.

**Pasta...but not as we know it:** Gluten free pasta is always essential for those cooking for kids with coeliac disease, but why not try something a little different, like vegetable-based pasta such as lentil or chickpea. Be sure to check the label to ensure the pasta alternative is 'Free From' gluten.



## Asda's Inclusive Gnocchi & Pesto

- When making your “Free From” gnocchi (with gluten free flour), add Xanthan gum to give it some added oomph and hold
- Whilst traditional pesto doesn't include nuts (pine nuts are actually a seed!), if you're worried a child with a nut allergy may have a reaction, swap your pine nuts for a can of cannellini beans
- Try vegan cheese, such as our Free From Mature Cheddar Alternative for an added bite to go with your basil
- When cooking your gnocchi, once you've removed them from the boiling water, you can give them a quick fry in a hot pan with a little sunflower spread (or any dairy alternative you prefer) for a couple of minutes, or until they start to get a “golden crisp” on the outside

It's also a good idea to steer your trolley toward the homeware section to stock-up on colour-coded labels to mark-up allergens in your child's lunchbox (or any tasty bakes they take to school), and containers to store free from foods, that way when you're cooking, you'll know which ingredients to grab depending on who you're cooking for. Also, grab separate cutlery and chopping boards, that way you can prevent cross-contamination when cooking.

With the nation spending an average of 2.5 hours extra in the kitchen each week making food to meet everyone's needs<sup>11</sup>, we have a simple kitchen hack for turning the tried-and-tested pesto gnocchi into a “Free From” favourite!

**For more delicious inclusive recipes, check the Asda Good Living website!**

# Glossary

## Allergen

Something that causes an allergic reaction. The most common food allergens are: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, fish and shellfish.

## Anaphylaxis

A serious allergic reaction that could be life threatening, characterised by flushing or swelling of the skin, swelling of the lips and tongue, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. Visit [anaphylaxis.org.uk](http://anaphylaxis.org.uk) for more information.

## Crohn's Disease

An inflammatory bowel disease, affecting the digestive tract. The main symptoms of Crohn's disease are diarrhoea, stomach ache and cramps, fatigue and weight loss. Visit [chronsandcolitis.org.uk](http://chronsandcolitis.org.uk) for more info.

## Coeliac Disease

An autoimmune disease in which the body is hypersensitive to gluten, leading to difficulty digesting food. Symptoms range from mild to severe, and can include bloating, diarrhoea, nausea, wind, constipation, tiredness, mouth ulcers, sudden or unexpected weight loss (but not in all cases), and anaemia. Visit [coeliac.org.uk](http://coeliac.org.uk) for more info.

## Dietary Requirement

A restriction on what can and can't be eaten, dictated by allergies, intolerances or lifestyle choice such as vegetarian and vegan. Also include diets influenced by religion, including Kocheh or Halal diets.

## EpiPen

An auto-injector that injects adrenaline into someone suffering an allergic reaction. Most kids will carry two EpiPens, administered 15 minutes apart if required. Whilst easy to use, if you're looking after a child with one, make sure their parent(s) give you a quick run-through on how to use it.

## Food Intolerance

Difficulty digesting certain foods due to negative effects on the body, such as bloating, stomach ache, and mild skin rashes.

## Free From

Products that do not contain certain ingredients known to cause a reaction in people with allergies or intolerances. Products include gluten free, wheat free and dairy-free, for example.

Inclusivity – Ensuring nobody feels excluded, regardless of diet.

## Lactose Intolerance

A common digestive problem where the body is unable to digest lactose, a sugar mainly found in milk and dairy products.

## Pescatarian

A person who does not eat meat but does eat fish.

## Vegan

A way of living which excludes eating food, wearing clothing or using products made from or of animals.

## Vegetarian

A person who does not eat meat or fish, but still eats dairy and eggs.

# ASDA

For more information, please contact  
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