

Common sense advice

Basic food safety knowledge is important to keep the risk of your Tea for ME event being memorable for all the wrong reasons!

- Always wash your hands before starting to bake, remove jewellery, tie back hair, wear a clean apron and ensure that all surfaces, bowls, utensils etc. are clean.
- Cakes that contain cream and cheesecakes need to be stored in a refrigerator before use or before taking to a venue. As with other types of prepared food, you should take extra care to ensure that the baking is covered and kept away from raw food, especially meat.
- If you're baking for people who are elderly or very young, do not use raw eggs in anything that won't be thoroughly cooked – an example of this is mousse or certain types of icing.
- Cakes should be stored and transported in dry, clean and sealable containers.
- Wash your hands as often as possible and use a cake slice or tongs to serve your cakes, rather than your fingers.
- Have some means of washing hands and equipment (if used) either a nearby sink or wash hand basin, or some bowls, soap, towel and some kind of water supply (e.g. flasks of hot water).
- Serving plates and forks/spoons are a good idea, especially for cheesecakes and any cakes or desserts containing cream or butter icing.
- The Food Standards Agency website at www.foodstandards.gov.uk offers an excellent range of advice on food safety and nutrition.

Most people who are allergic to a particular ingredient will ask you if your baking contains it, and whilst you don't have to label the food you're serving, it would be a good idea to make reference to those products which do contain allergens. Of the 14 main allergens the following are the most likely to be ingredients in baking -

- Peanuts,
- Tree nuts,
- Milk,
- Eggs,
- Soya,
- Cereals containing gluten,
- Sesame seeds
- Lupin flour

If you decide to produce labels for your food, do ensure that the information is accurate. All ingredients should be listed in descending order of weight, and you will need to embolden any ingredients that could cause an allergic reaction.

Also, be careful when serving tea and coffee as the drink may scald if spilled. Always clear up spillages as soon as possible to avoid people slipping and try to arrange furniture to minimise the risk of tripping and falling.