



Skyrocketing dietary demands: Does your hotel measure up?

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In a world where dietary restrictions and allergies are on the rise, hotels, resorts, and spas must be prepared to meet the increasing dietary demands of their clients with diverse menus and knowledgeable staff. Has your organization kept pace with the growing requirements of its clients?

The pressure to respond to requests for special dietary meals is mounting for many reasons. Allergies are on the rise requiring choices that are as gluten-free, nut-free, or dairy-free. Medical conditions may require low salt, sugar free, or fat free meals. Religious observance has long been standard for many hotels, resorts, and spas to serve kosher, Halal, vegetarian and other meals dictated by adherence to religious beliefs. Individuals who restrict their diets by choice often select the places to stay or visit based on the availability of foods that meet their needs.

A recent study¹ indicates that food allergies have increased in many westernized countries, and is starting to increase in developing countries as well. Several years ago, customers would be impressed by seeing a “V” or “N” beside menu options to indicate that the food was “vegetarian” or contained “nuts”. Customers have become much more demanding in food choices including those with food allergies. Without meeting those demands, customers will take their business elsewhere.

Extra precautions with handling and serving food and beverages are essential to protect the health of guests as well as to guard against potential liability. Serving a guest food with an ingredient to which the person is allergic is putting the person and hotel at risk. An allergic reaction can result in the person needing immediate medical attention and could result in hospitalization or death.

Safety is one factor driving the need for hotels to offer diverse menus. Training is an essential part of the safety program to ensure that staff is knowledgeable about which ingredients are in each dish served. Would your staff know what when a guest suffers an allergic reaction?



Hotels, resorts, and spas are increasingly working with healthcare providers to become the accommodation of choice for their patients. Visitors may be traveling for medical and dental care without hotels knowing the purpose of their stays. Whether attracting these guests is intentional or incidental, medical tourists often have dietary requirements before and after treatments. Special dietary considerations including liquid or soft food options must be made for individuals who are post-dental and medical treatments. Is your hotel prepared to handle such requirements?

Kitchens routinely have the necessary certifications in place for food handling and that menus are providing more detail and menu choices. But is that enough? If the proper training is not provided to staff, they may recommend the wrong meal or give incorrect information about ingredients, triggering problems for guests.

The [Hotel Hershey](#) in Hershey, Pennsylvania is a good example of a hotel that is committed to the well-being of its guests when it comes to meeting special dietary requirements. The hotel provides guests with various allergen-friendly meal options as well as information indicating which ingredients contain the respective allergens.ⁱⁱ Other information is provided such as the material of the gloves worn by staff for guests with allergies to latex and other materials. Staff is trained to cater to any special dietary requests that guests may have.



Hotels are taking the necessary steps to address the changing dietary demands made by their clients. Medical Tourism Training delivered an assessment using its [Redi4HealthTravelers](#) tool along with training and consulting services to [prepare a hotel in Costa Rica](#), the Ramada Plaza Herradura, to become Costa Rica's leading resort in medical tourism. These services included working with the restaurants on-site to create menus designed for medical tourists as well as guests with dietary restrictions.

Medical Tourism Training is ready to assist you with a review of those protocols as well as training programs to keep guests healthy, happy, and returning for visits in the future. [Contact Medical Tourism Training today](#) to learn more about our [Redi4HealthTravelers](#) assessment, training programs, and consulting services designed for hotels, resorts, and spas to keep your organization competitive, guests safe and well-fed, and staff knowledgeable about the food they serve.

ⁱ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/imi.13362/full> accessed on December 2, 2017

ⁱⁱ <http://www.thehotelhershey.com/dining/allergens.php> accessed December 2, 2017

[http://www.hersheypark.com/things-to-do/dining/allergens.php?_utma=90260191.283453917.1508344825.1508344825.1508344825.1&_utmb=90260191.1.10.1508344825&_utmc=90260191&_utmz=90260191.1508344825.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=\(organic\)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=\(not%20provided\)&_utmv=90260191.1|1=Cmpn=thehotelhershey=1&_utmk=99208598&_ga=2.106136003.178760841.1508344827-283453917.1508344825](http://www.hersheypark.com/things-to-do/dining/allergens.php?_utma=90260191.283453917.1508344825.1508344825.1508344825.1&_utmb=90260191.1.10.1508344825&_utmc=90260191&_utmz=90260191.1508344825.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=(not%20provided)&_utmv=90260191.1|1=Cmpn=thehotelhershey=1&_utmk=99208598&_ga=2.106136003.178760841.1508344827-283453917.1508344825) accessed December 2, 2017