

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

## The impact of bulk food buying on people living with allergy

Allergy UK, Anaphylaxis Campaign and the BSACI (British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology) are asking you to consider the needs of people living with food allergies in these challenging times.

The current 'bulk buying', which is showing no sign of abating, is having an unexpected impact on people living with food allergy as they shop for 'free from' foods for themselves and family members. This is because shoppers are buying 'free from' products that exclude certain allergens from their ingredients when mainstream products are temporarily out of stock. In one of a number of cases reported to us a mother was unable to buy oat milk for her child, despite visits to a number of supermarkets, as shoppers had bought up stocks when cow's milk was not available.

We are asking supermarkets to be aware of this and, if and where possible, to discourage this practice, perhaps through signage at the fixture. Allergy is not yet categorised as an 'underlying health condition' and we are talking to government agencies urgently about how this might be addressed. In the meantime we are asking you to consider ways in which this practice might be discouraged in your stores. People with food allergies are not able to buy alternatives; they have no choice, and they need these products to protect themselves and their families from the potentially fatal consequences of an allergic reaction.

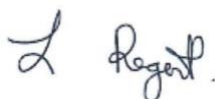
We also want to draw your attention to concerns expressed by our allergic communities that the current pressure on supermarkets and food production might cause less stringency in the management of allergens, food labelling and the prevention of cross contamination. We want to be able to provide reassurance on this point and hope that you will provide that reassurance to us.

Finally, we hope that you will consider the food allergic community when you review your product lines in this period, to ensure that people living with food allergy are able to buy the products that they need.

We look forward to your response.



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