

# FOODMAESTRO

2016 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2016

## A SMARTER WAY TO SEARCH FOR FOOD ALLERGENS

Project URL: <http://foodmaestro.me>

Project Twitter: [@foodmaestrouk](https://twitter.com/foodmaestrouk)

Organisation URL: <http://foodmaestro.me/contact>

- Health
- Internet
- Mobile

In the UK, between 2004 and 2015, food allergy-related hospital admissions rose from 2,758 to 4,744. Meanwhile, food packaging has remained often difficult to interpret, with ingredients often represented on food labels using codes. Take 'egg' for example, which is commonly labelled as 'E1102'.

Dharmendra Patel's son suffers from lactose intolerance, which makes food shopping tough. "I didn't even know that crisps contain milk. If I'm that naïve then there must be others with the same issue," said the founder of the FoodMaestro app, released this year.

Patel developed FoodMaestro in collaboration with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, dieticians and allergy specialists, in order to put people in control of what they are eating.

The app is free for consumers, and allows them to filter through 200 ingredients and 100,000 products to check if a food item is suitable for their needs. They can simply scan a barcode while shopping, or search by food, ingredient or product name. A smiley or frown face tells them immediately whether an item is safe.

An online platform is also available for healthcare professionals, so they can recommend safe products to their patients, and a commercial platform enables restaurants to legally confirm a list of allergens on their menu and tailor ingredients to cater to customers with allergies.

FoodMaestro has 10,000 regular users so far. Dr Lauri-Ann Van der Poel, a paediatrician and allergist at St Thomas' Hospital, says that "one nine-year-old boy was allergic to milk, eggs and nuts, which cut him down to a choice of two

cereal bars in the morning...with the app we found so many more that he could eat. His mum was nearly crying."

Try the app via <http://foodmaestro.me>

*Image courtesy of William Brawley*

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