

Putting THOUGHT into Food Allergens

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Food Allergy Facts & Statistics

- ❑ In the US, approximately 15 million people (4.7% of US pop) have food allergies including ~6 million children (1 in 13) with approximately 20 children deaths annually^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 33}
- ❑ The economic cost of children's food allergies is nearly \$25 billion per year⁶
- ❑ Research suggests that almost 50% of fatal food allergy reactions are triggered by food consumed outside of the home^{10, 11, 12}

Food Allergy Facts & Statistics

Every 3 minutes a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency department – that is about 200,000 emergency department visits per year, and every 6 minutes the reaction is one of anaphylaxis³²



What Do You Need to Know?



What Do You Need to Know?

- What is a food allergy?
- What is the difference between a food allergy and a food intolerance?
- How do I manage a food allergy?

What is a Food Allergy?

- ❑ It is when your body's immune system reacts to a food protein as it has mistaken that food protein as a threat²²
- ❑ People can be allergic to any food, at any time, but 8 foods are responsible for 90% of most food allergic reactions in the U.S.^{5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21}
- ❑ Those foods include: milk, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish & crustacean shellfish^{5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21}

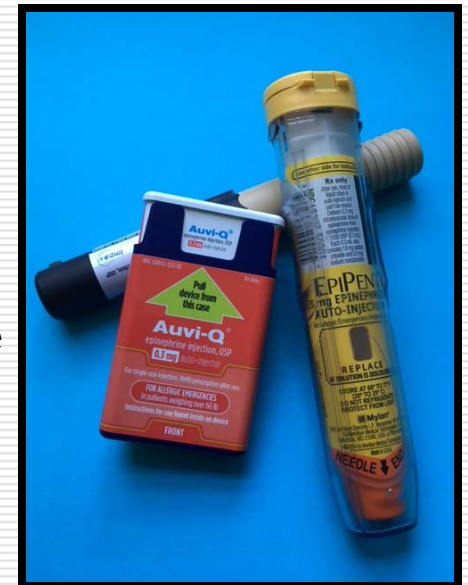


What is the Difference Between a Food Allergy & a Food Intolerance?

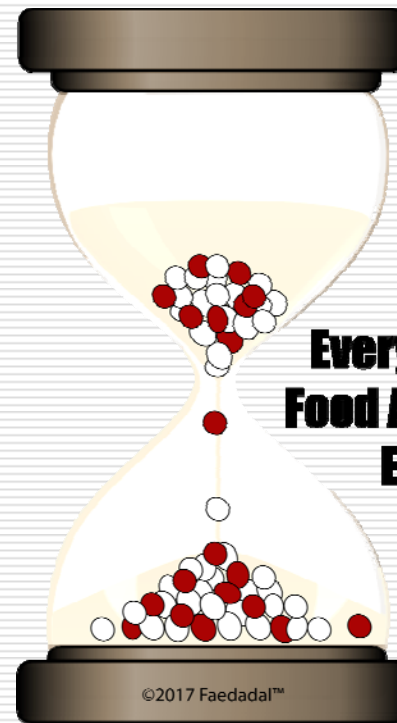
- ❑ **Food Allergies** involve the immune system and can be life threatening
- ❑ They cause the immune system to make too many immunoglobulin type E (IgE) antibodies
- ❑ When IgE antibodies bind with allergens, they cause some white blood cells (mast) to release histamine and other chemicals
- ❑ The chemical release causes the symptoms of an allergic reaction
- ❑ A **Food Intolerance** is a digestive disorder which causes the inability to digest certain foods normally
- ❑ Symptoms include stomach upset or gassiness, but it is not considered life-threatening
- ❑ Lactose is the most common intolerance

How do I Manage Food Allergies?

- ❑ Read every label, every time. Federal law* requires the top 8 major food allergens be declared in simple terms either in the ingredient list or separate statement on pre-packaged foods⁷
- ❑ Be mindful of cross-contact
- ❑ Always carry the epinephrine auto-injector if prescribed
- ❑ Even a trace amount of a food allergen can cause a serious reaction^{23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28}
- ❑ Past reactions do not predict future reactions²⁹



What do I Want to Learn?



Every 3 minutes a life threatening Food Allergy sends someone to the Emergency Room

What Do I Want to Learn?

- How do I recognize an allergic reaction?
- How do I read a food label?
- What is Cross-Contact (Cross-Contamination)?
- What do I need to know when dining out?
- How do I work with others?
- How do I manage food allergies in a classroom or school?
- What can I do to include those with food allergies?

How Do I Recognize an Allergic Reaction?

- ❑ Very difficult to predict
- ❑ The last reaction may be nothing like the next one²⁹
- ❑ First symptoms can appear within a few minutes to a few hours later³¹
- ❑ In some cases, after the symptoms go away, a second wave of symptoms comes back one to four hours later (but could be longer). This is called a biphasic reaction³¹
- ❑ Symptoms include (but not limited to): trouble breathing, coughing, vomiting, weak pulse, hives, rash or swelling³¹
- ❑ Anaphylaxis is a rapidly progressing, life-threatening allergic reaction which typically involves multiple systems³¹

Understanding Food Labels

- ❑ **Triple Check: Read the label at the store, when unpacking the groceries & before serving the food**
- ❑ Food Allergen Labeling & Consumer Protection Action (FALCPA) – this law requires that food labels show in plain english when a major food allergen or any ingredient contains protein from a major food allergen is added⁷
- ❑ Imported and domestic pre-packaged foods are required to have a label that lists the major food allergens when they are intentionally added as an ingredient or an ingredient contains the protein from a major food allergen⁷
- ❑ The FDA considers the following foods major food allergens: milk, wheat, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, fish crustacean shellfish (but not molluscan shellfish – scallops, clams, oysters) and soy⁷



Example 1 - *Ingredients: Whey protein (milk), lecithin (soy), cherry, sugar, natural flavors (almond), salt*

Example 2 - *Ingredients: Whey protein, lecithin, cherry, sugar, natural flavors, salt. **Contains: Milk, soy and almond.***

Understanding Food Labels

- ❑ Pre-packaged food labels are not required to disclose precautionary warnings or advisory statements which are voluntary^{7, 9}
- ❑ For example, may contain or processed in facility with or processed on equipment with^{7, 9}
- ❑ A manufacturer is not required to indicate if there may be unintentional traces of an allergen due to cross-contact during processing^{7, 9}
- ❑ Most allergists recommend avoiding these products as studies have shown that some of the products do contain enough of the allergen to cause an allergic reaction^{23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28}
- ❑ Be aware of unexpected sources of allergens; for example, coconut is now classified as a tree nut



Foods not Covered by FALCPA

- ❑ Fresh meats, fresh fruits and vegetables

- ❑ Restaurant foods placed in a wrapper or carryout box for an individual customer

- ❑ Highly refined oils even derived from a major allergen (such as peanut or tree nut)

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Food allergen labeling and consumer protection act of 2004 (public law 108-282, title II). Retrieved from http://www.fda.gov/food/labelingnutrition/FoodAllergensLabeling/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm_106187.htm

Cross-Contact (Cross-Contamination)

- ❑ Happens when one food comes into contact with another food and their proteins mix
- ❑ Even a small amount of food protein can cause a reaction^{23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28}

Direct Cross-Contact (Allergen directly applied & then removed)	Indirect Cross-Contact (Allergen was not directly applied)
Peeling cheese off a cheeseburger to make it a hamburger	Using the same spatula that flipped a cheeseburger to flip a hamburger
Removing an allergen (shrimp or nuts) from a salad after salad has already been prepared	Not washing hands after handling an allergen (shrimp or nuts) before making the next salad
Scraping peanut butter off a piece of bread and using the same piece of bread to make a different sandwich	Not properly cleaning a knife used to spread peanut butter before using it to spread jelly

Tips to Avoid Cross-Contact

- ❑ Use only utensils, cutting boards and pans that have been washed in soap & water
- ❑ Cook the allergy-safe foods first
- ❑ Keep the safe foods covered and away from other foods that may splatter
- ❑ If you make a mistake, toss the contaminated food; do not try to remove the allergen
- ❑ After handling an allergen, always wash your hands with soap & water before touching anything else; **hand sanitizer alone will not remove the allergen**
- ❑ Scrub down counters and tables with soap and water after meal preparation
- ❑ Do not ever share food, drinks or utensils

Dining Out with Food Allergies

- ❑ Ask around, do research, review the menu in advance and call the restaurant and speak with a manager
- ❑ Avoid riskier choices such as buffets, bakeries, fried foods, desserts and restaurant foods sourced through distributors without cross-contact information or from unknown sources
- ❑ Insist on discussing your meal choice with the chef to understand what is in the food and how it is being prepared
- ❑ If at anytime you do not feel confident that the restaurant staff understands your food allergy, then don't eat there
- ❑ Never eat without having your epinephrine auto-injector with you

How to Work with Others



- ❑ Education, planning & cooperation
- ❑ Educate Yourself
 - Know which foods to avoid
 - Know the signs of an allergic reaction
 - Know the role of epinephrine in treatment
 - Know the right way to use an epinephrine auto-injector
 - Find out as much as you can about the organizations approach to managing food allergies
 - Learn what practices and accommodations are recommended
- ❑ Create a Plan
 - If required, obtain a written food allergy management plan such as a 504 plan which outlines the accommodations
 - Children whose food allergy may result in severe, life-threatening reactions can meet the definition of a disability under section 504

For more information about Section 504 and the ADA can be found at:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

<https://www.foodallergy.org/laws-and-regulations>

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/

How to Manage Food Allergens in a Classroom or School

- ❑ BE AWARE - Most food allergies develop in children 6 years of age or younger, but they can occur for the first time at any age, including adulthood
- ❑ Be clear and consistent with procedures and protocols
- ❑ Communicate with parents and volunteers
- ❑ Plan for activities that can exclude the food and include the child
- ❑ Know what to look for: read labels, understand that all reactions do not look the same
- ❑ Don't take risks
- ❑ Be honest, if you do not understand what foods to avoid in class, ask for help.
- ❑ If there is a chance that protocols or procedures were breached, inform the parent of any student who might be at risk

What Can You Do to Include Those with Food Allergies?

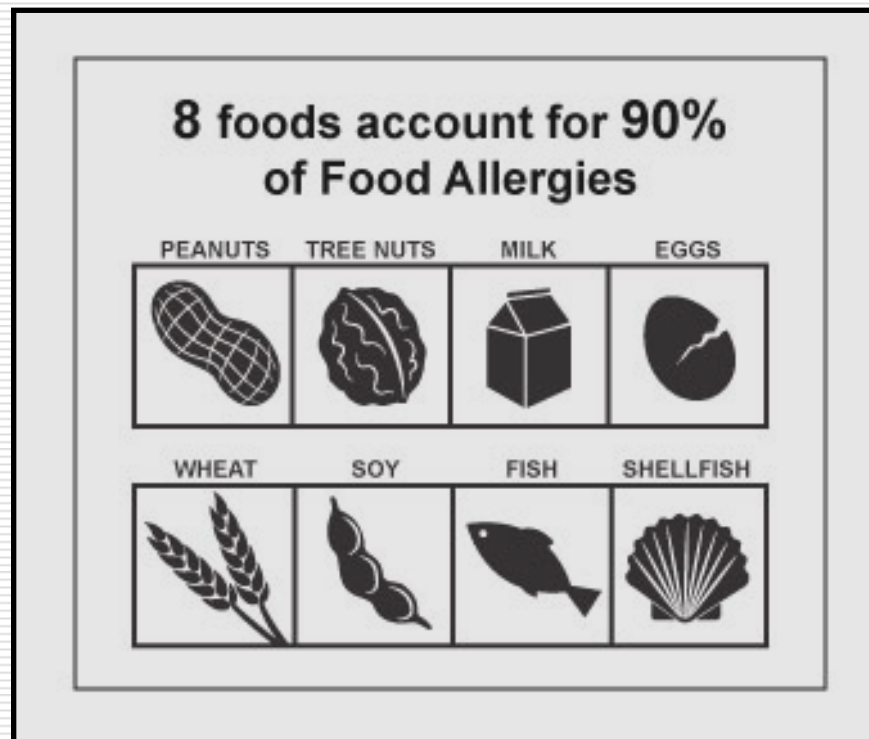
- ❑ Work directly with the parents to ensure any food provided is safe for everyone
- ❑ Don't plan activities that include foods that an allergic child can't have or provide them with an alternative; this just makes them feel different or excluded from the activity
- ❑ Consider ... including the child and not the food!



Preparing Others to Care for Children with Food Allergies

- ❑ Explain the allergy, which foods to avoid and other safety precautions
- ❑ Carefully explain the symptoms of a food allergy reaction and what do if a reaction occurs
- ❑ Show them how to use the epinephrine auto-injector and make sure they are comfortable using it
- ❑ Act first and call parent later (inject epinephrine, call 911 and then call parent or guardian)
- ❑ Make it easy to reach you (cell phone is preferred)
- ❑ Explain the dangers of cross-contact and how to avoid it
- ❑ Teach them how to read food labels
- ❑ Always provide food that is safe for your child to eat
- ❑ Put everything in writing

What Have We Learned Today?

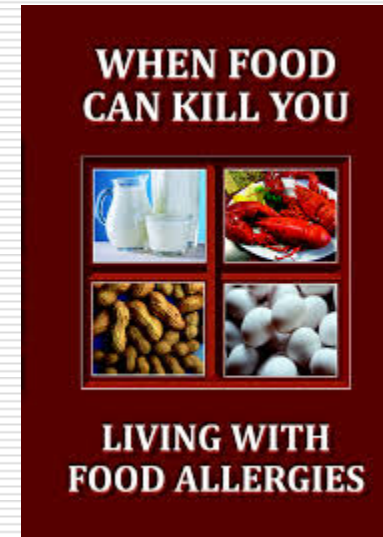


Summary

- ❑ Difference between food allergy and food intolerance
- ❑ How to recognize the allergy symptoms
- ❑ Read every label every time
- ❑ Always carry your EpiPen and if you use the EpiPen, call 911
- ❑ Past reactions do not predict future reactions
- ❑ Anyone at anytime can develop a food allergy
- ❑ Include the child and not the food

Food Allergy Resources

- ❑ www.foodallergy.org (FARE)
- ❑ www.kidswithfoodallergies.org
- ❑ www.foodallergyawareness.org
- ❑ www.faedadal.com
- ❑ <https://henrico.us/pr/hctv-program-schedule/online-programs/>



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What Questions Do You Have?

