

Education

An allergy to food is no different from any other form of allergy, like a bee sting. Allergies are triggered by the immune system reacting to a protein. The reaction caused by an allergy to food tends to occur immediately after exposure, but it also can occur several hours later. The allergy can be relatively minor (itching) to life threatening (swelling of the airways). The allergy can affect almost any of the body's systems, including skin, respiratory, gastrointestinal or cardiovascular. If you think you have a food allergy you should talk to your health care practitioner about the need to carry an emergency treatment, like epinephrine.

Food sensitivities or intolerances are also abnormal reactions to foods. However, these do not involve the body's immune system. Sensitivities can take the form of:

- An inability to properly metabolize a food (e.g. lactose intolerance)
- An abnormal response to a food (e.g. sulphite-induced asthma)
- A release of histamines, similar to an allergy, but the immune system is not involved

In some cases people with a food sensitivity can eat small amounts of the food with no or little reaction.

Top Food Allergies

As you prepare for your elimination diet you should consider whether your symptoms may be caused by a sensitivity to any of these food groups. The information in this section will help you to identify the foods most likely to be causing your problems and how to recognize some unexpected places where they may be found. For more information on these allergy causing food groups visit - <http://bit.ly/1p3AfxU>

Peanuts, Soy and other Legumes

The most common allergies are to peanut, soy and lupin. Allergies can also be caused by other legumes such as chickpea, lentils and peas. Especially with peanut, for some people an allergic reaction can be triggered by skin contact or inhalation.

rememberRead labels carefully. Foods and products that may contain:

- Peanuts - such as hydrolyzed plant proteins, some vegetarian meat substitutes, some cosmetics, some stuffing in toys, etc.
- Soy - such as some 'dairy-free' products, meal replacements, some sauces, including teriyaki and Worcestershire, some cosmetics, some craft material, some pet foods, etc.

Tree Nuts

People with nut allergies can react to several different nuts. As with peanut, for some people an allergic reaction can be triggered by skin contact or inhalation.

rememberRead labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that you may not think would contain tree nuts, such as Torrone, bird seed, some massage oils, some cosmetics, and some bean bags.



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Cereals and Grains

Allergy to cereals, especially wheat, is commonly observed in infants and can disappear by the time the child turns five. Wheat is the most common allergen, but people with an allergy to wheat may also be allergic to related crops such as barley, oats or rye.

Remember: Read labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that you may not think would contain wheat – For more information you can view the Gluten Guide at <http://bit.ly/1oFEvVo>.

Sesame

Some other names that may be used for sesame – benniseed, gingelly, sesamol, til, etc.

Remember: Read labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that may contain sesame – bread products, some vegetarian burgers, tahini, tempeh, some bandages, some ointments and soaps, some pet or poultry feed, etc.

Milk

An allergy to milk is associated with an immune reaction against a specific protein contained in milk, while intolerance is often a genetically determined inability to metabolize lactose.

Remember: Read labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that you may not think would contain milk – some battered foods, caramel flavouring, some broths or bouillons, some egg or fat substitutes, instant potatoes, high protein flour, etc.

Some of the other names that may be used for milk – rennet casein, anything including the word ‘caseinate’, whey and whey proteins, etc.

Fish

Allergies to fish tend to be more common in areas where a lot of fish is eaten. An allergy to one type of fish tends to mean you will have a sensitivity to other types.

Remember: Read labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that you may not think would contain fish or seafood – some relishes including caponata, gelatin, some sauces including Worcestershire, some lip balms, some fertilizers, etc.

Eggs

An allergy to eggs often occurs in childhood, but as for an allergy to cows milk it often disappears by age six. The majority of the proteins that cause the allergic reaction are from the white of the egg, but some people can be allergic to the proteins found in the yolk. As the proteins in eggs of other birds (like ducks) are similar they may also cause an allergic reaction. Eating the meat of chickens or other birds does not seem to be linked to an egg allergen.

Remember: Read labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that you may not think would contain egg – some medications or anesthetics, some vaccines, some hair care products, Lecithin, some battered or breaded food, some pastas, some fat replacers, some sauces including tartar, etc.

CautionSome of the other names that may be used for egg – albumin, lysozyme, anything containing ‘ovo’, etc.



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Sulphites

Sulphites are used in many ways in the processing of food, e.g. as a preservative, to maintain colour, etc. They also can occur naturally in some foods and in the human body. Reports suggest that in some people a reaction can occur if sulphites are inhaled.

Remember: Read labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that you may not think would contain sulphite – some alcoholic or non-alcoholic beer or wine, some canned, dried or frozen fruits or vegetables, some fresh grapes, some dried herbs, spices or teas, some vinegars, bottle sanitizing solutions, etc.

Look for words containing ‘sulphites’ or ‘sulphiting’

Mustard

Mustard is a member of the brassicaceae family. Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, brussel sprouts, turnip and rapeseed are members of this family, and the seeds of these plants contain proteins like those in mustard seeds. Some people who are allergic to mustard seeds have reported reactions to these related plants, but normally the allergy is to the protein in the seeds and those usually are not present in mature plants.

Remember: Read labels carefully as there are a number of foods and products that you may not think would contain mustard – sauces including béarnaise, mayonnaise, gravy, Cumberland, etc.. Others include dehydrated soups, processed meats, etc.