

GLUTEN

AND OTHER FOOD ALLERGIES

Leaders Guide

Having food allergies presents challenges but the majority of people with allergies lead a normal active life, educating yourself and family is key to coping and living well with these disorders.

I realize if you have food allergies you may already know some of the information in this lesson however, someone you know may develop an allergy and you may be able to help them understand what is involved in living with a chronic disorder.

The immune system is the body's natural defense system that helps fight infection and is responsible for allergic reactions and allergies. Sometimes the body mistakenly identifies substances as harmful and attacks the body's own cells, which is known as autoimmune disease. Since we don't have a pill to prevent allergic reactions it is up to you to be vigilant to avoid problem foods.

An allergic reaction can affect the skin, the gastrointestinal tract, the respiratory tract and the cardiovascular system and in severe cases can cause anaphylaxis which should always be treated as a medical emergency, if you have a food or any allergy you should carry a self-injectable epinephrine pen and wear Medic Alert jewelry.

Gluten (from the Latin *gluten* "glue") is a rubbery like protein found in wheat, barley, rye and low level oats which helps dough bind to make bread and other baked foods.

Legend has attributed the discovery of gluten to Buddhist monks who were seeking a meat-like substitute to use in their vegetarian diet. Wheat was readily available and they discovered that by mixing it with water and kneading, the water could be extracted and left behind a gummy mass (gluten) which could be dried and milled and when mixed with yeast produced bubbles of carbon dioxide causing the dough to rise, the more it is kneaded the chewier the product gets, which is why bagels are heavier than cakes and pie dough.

Gluten is used as a stabilizing agent in an assortment of products, Ice cream, catsup processed meats, sauces and soups etc. and constitutes a hazard for people with wheat allergies and celiac disease however, it should be noted that wheat allergy and celiac disease are different disorders.

A person with **gluten intolerance** or **gluten allergy** can experience hives, swelling, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting and asthma, for a person highly sensitive to gluten these symptoms can be life-threatening.

Celiac disease is an immune system disorder, your immune system attacks the gluten which then attacks the small intestine and can cause gas and bloating, diarrhea, weight loss, weakness and feeling very tired, these symptoms can mirror other disorders and needs a doctor's diagnosis to confirm. To stay well you need to avoid any foods made with wheat, rye and barley or drink beer and ale.

With proper care and diet you enjoy a hearty choice of foods. Betty Crocker and General Mills have 250+ items which are gluten free.

Peanut Allergy:

Peanut allergy is one of the most common allergies and unfortunately one of the most dangerous because some people may have a reaction from a **trace** amount of peanuts or peanut **dust**. Children have the highest incidence of peanut allergies, and unlike other allergies children do not always outgrow it. Research is still ongoing to find out why peanuts cause severe reactions,

The peanut is not really a nut, but legumes, people with peanut allergies are not always allergic to other legumes.

A person with peanut allergies may also be allergic to tree nuts.

Tree Nut allergy:

Like peanuts, tree nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, pecans, etc.) can cause a severe reaction and tend to be life-long though **some** children outgrow it.

Avoid natural nut extracts, imitation or artificially flavored extracts generally are safe. Some alcoholic beverages may contain some nut flavorings, nut proteins can also be found in cereal, crackers, chocolate, flavored coffee and some cold cuts. Be extra vigilant in restaurants and prepared foods, read all label, if in doubt don't eat it.

Check with your doctor for any nut products you have a question about.

Soy Allergy:

Soybeans are legumes, soy and peanut proteins are similar in structure, however if you are allergic to one you might not be allergic to the other, this is usually an allergy that starts in early childhood and outgrown by age three.

Soy can be found in products you might not think it will be in, such as breads, cookies, canned broth, canned tuna, energy bars and low-fat peanut butter to name a few. Asian foods are at high risk to contain soy products. If you are not sure if a product contains soy, call the manufacturer.

Seed Allergy:

Sesame seeds are on the rise as an allergen, Canada and the European Commission have added Sesame seeds to the list to be reported on food labels, the US does not at this time have these seeds on their list. Allergies to other seeds (poppy, pumpkin rapeseed, sunflower and flaxseed) are much less common and not reported, so at this time there is no data on them.

Always be aware of the possibility for cross contamination.

Milk Allergy:

Cow's milk is the most common food allergy in children and infants. The immune system mistakenly sees milk proteins as something it needs to fight off. Sheep and goat milk will produce the same reactions as cow's milk, most common reactions are: excessively fussy, and irritable, vomiting, cramps, rash, diarrhea, sneezing, runny nose and breathing problems. Most children outgrow this allergy

Milk protein is found in all dairy products as well as artificial butter, cheese flavor, curds, ghee, nougat rennet, whey, cold cuts, cereals, chewing gum and canned tuna. In restaurants, shellfish is often dipped in milk to reduce the fishy odor.

Milk allergy should not to be confused with lactose intolerance, food intolerances do not affect the immune system as an allergy does, lactose intolerant people lack an enzyme called lactase, which breaks down lactose, a sugar found in dairy products.

Shellfish Allergy:

This allergy is considered the most common food allergy and can be life-threatening and a frequent trigger of anaphylactic reactions. When eating out people with shellfish allergies should be very alert to cross-contamination such as utensils or same work surfaces as other food preparation. Be sure to check labels for presence of shellfish or fish proteins. Some people may react to aerosolized shellfish vapors, it may be wise to avoid steam tables or areas where shellfish is being cooked.

Fish Allergy:

Fresh finned fish can cause severe reactions because of the protein in the flesh of fish. Fish oil can be contaminated with small molecules of protein and should be avoided. However, many people with finned fish allergies are able to eat canned tuna, salmon and shellfish.

The same precautions should be taken as with shellfish.

Egg allergy:

Egg allergies are common in children second only to cow's milk, most children eventually outgrow this allergy the white of the egg contains the allergy producing proteins. Egg protein can be found in numerous foods such as breads, pastas, ice cream, salad dressings, frosting, mayonnaise, meatloaf etc. read ingredients carefully.

The less obvious foods for hidden egg proteins are: salad dressings, lollipops, candies, canned soup.

Egg whites and shells may also be used as a clarifying agent in soup stock, consommés, wine and other alcohol and coffee drinks,

Substitutes rice for pasta in some recipes, and make your own bread.

For each egg, one of the following may be substituted:

1 tsp. baking powder, 1 T water and 1T vinegar

1 tsp yeast dissolved in ¼ c. warm water

1 ½ T water, 1 ½ T oil and 1tsp. baking powder

1 packet gelatin and 2 T warm water (mix just prior to use)

2 T puree may be used as binding, but not as a leavening.

Anyone can develop food allergies, however because their immune systems are more immature, children can develop allergies at an early age and can outgrow these allergies as they age and their immune systems develop.

Fruits and vegetables:

Although fruits contain lots of anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatory properties the number of people suffering from fruit and vegetables allergies are soaring and could surpass the number of people suffering from peanut allergies especially for people who suffer from hay fever, pollen from trees and weeds contain proteins similar in structure to those found in some fruit, vegetables and nuts. Cooking or heating breaks down the allergens.

Banana:

Anyone allergic to these can also be allergic to pears, kiwi, pineapple and avocado.

Reactions can include headaches and migraine, coughing, sneezing and wheezing, runny nose, diarrhea, increased heart palpitations and cramping. Reaction can come from touching the skin.

Pineapple:

As stated above anyone with a reaction to pineapple will most likely have a reaction to pears, kiwi, and avocado. Reactions include itchiness, diarrhea, vomiting and rash

Peaches and other pitted fruit:

The skin is worse than the flesh, cooking seems to help reduce the affects. Reactions include rash, hives, nausea and vomiting, low blood pressure and breathing difficulties.

Tomato:

A true allergy is rare it's more likely to be food intolerance, but reactions can be tingling lips, chest constriction. Most people only get the reactions from raw tomatoes, cooking or processing usually makes them safer to eat,

Watermelon:

This one is truly rare but as with nuts and shellfish can be the most deadly, there are 34 symptoms you can get from watermelon, as well as the reactions from all the other food allergies you can also get lip swelling, tongue swelling, eczema, low blood pressure, lightheadedness, facial swelling, chronic respiratory disorders, (asthma, sleep apnea, COPD and emphysema. You don't even have to eat this to get reactions you can get them from the smell alone.

Strawberries:

One of 30 most common food allergies, reactions are the same as most fruit allergies.

Potato:

Usually white potatoes only, cooking may reduce the possibility of reaction, which are wheezing, skin reactions, headache and migraines and eczema.

Mushrooms:

This one is quite rare, only 1% of the population is usually affected by these. Reactions are; mouth itching, tissue swelling, itchiness and breathing difficulties, it is not known why you may have an allergy to only one or two varieties it may be the reaction to the mold some mushrooms have. You may get reactions from consumption or inhalation, cooking may reduce the affects.

Be aware that some skin products such as Aveno contain shitake mushrooms.

Onions:

Yellow onions seem to be the worst of the onion family, cooking sometimes helps reduce the affect on the body. Reactions can include blotting, gas and digestion discomfort, hives and itching all over the body.

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Member Handout

Gluten allergy:

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With proper care and diet you enjoy a hearty choice of foods. Betty Crocker

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Egg allergy:

Egg allergies are common in children second only to cow's milk, most children eventually outgrow this allergy the white contains the allergenic proteins. If you are on an egg restricted diet be aware that many breads, pastas, canned soup, ice cream, salad dressings etc contain eggs, read ingredients carefully.

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Bibliography

Web MD

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