

Food Allergies

What is a Food Allergy?

A food allergy is an immune system response to specific proteins in foods which are typically harmless to other people. It can be life-threatening and cause hives, eczema, and difficulty breathing.

Allergy vs. Intolerance

While an allergy is an immune response that can cause an immediate, life-threatening reaction, an intolerance is not as bad. Intolerances occur gradually and do not involve systemic reactions. It also may happen if large amounts are eaten. **Both** can cause upset stomach, gas, and diarrhea.

Tips for Dealing with Food Allergies

Beware of cross-contamination! Situations in which food may have come in contact with another allergen are not required to be labeled. For example, a granola bar may contain nuts you're not allergic to, but there's a chance those nuts could have come in contact with other types of nuts.

Create allergen free zones within your home.

Always read ingredient labels, whether you think the food is safe or not.

Keep "safe" and "unsafe" foods separate within your pantry or refrigerator.

Always explain your allergy to your server when you go out to eat.

9 Most Common Food Allergens and Their Hidden Sources*

Allergen	Hidden Sources
Milk	Deli meats, chocolate, pesto, salad dressing, bread, sorbet
Tree Nuts	Pesto, cereals, chocolate, candy, marzipan
Fish	Salad dressings (Caesar), fish sauce, Worcestershire sauce
Shellfish	Flavorings, fried rice, sushi
Wheat	Potato chips, deli meats, fried foods w/breading, ice cream, bouillon cubes
Soy	Deli meats, vegetable broth, cereals, sauces
Peanuts	Sauces (mole), marinades, salad dressings, candy, nut butters
Eggs	Ice cream, meatballs, mayonnaise, baked goods
Sesame	Asian cuisine, dips, baked goods, crackers, cereal, spice blends, margarine, energy bars, vegetarian burgers, tahini

These 9 allergies make up 90% of food allergies. They are required to be on the label of foods in the U.S..

*Hidden sources: <https://www.foodallergy.org/living-food-allergies/food-allergy-essentials/common-allergens/sesame>