

# Food Allergies

Food allergies affect as many as 32 million Americans, including 26 million adults and 5.6 million children. Food allergy affects approximately 7.6 percent(1) of children and 10.8 percent(2) of adults in the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that although food allergy is more prevalent in children(3) than adults, many affected children can "outgrow" food allergies with age.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) reports that the prevalence of food allergy in children increased by 50 percent between 1997 and 2011(5).

A food allergy is an immune system response to a food the body mistakenly believes is harmful.

When a person with food allergy eats the food, his or her immune system releases massive amounts of chemicals, including histamine, that trigger a cascade of symptoms that can affect the respiratory system, the gastrointestinal tract, the skin, and/or the cardiovascular system.

There is no cure for food allergies(3).

The prevalence of food allergies appears to be increasing among children under the age of 18, that is 2 students in every classroom.

Although food allergy desensitization's are being studied, these are not yet proven treatments, so strict avoidance is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction.

Managing a food allergy on a daily basis involves constant vigilance.

Trace amounts of an allergen can trigger an allergic reaction in some individuals.

Unfortunately, food allergy deaths do occur, even among persons with a history of mild reactions in the past.

9-1-1 must ALWAYS be called with every anaphylactic reaction.

## FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS



Foods that most often cause an allergic reaction:

PEANUTS  
TREE NUTS  
WHEAT  
SOY

MILK  
EGGS  
FISH  
SHELLFISH

However, other, less common foods can also cause allergic reactions. Reactions can range from mild to deadly.

**Anaphylaxis** is a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death. The most common causes of anaphylaxis are food, medication, insect stings, and latex.

Common warning signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction:

- Complaint of a tingling, itchiness, or metallic taste in the mouth
- Hives
- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling and/or itching of the mouth and throat area
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Cramps and stomach pain
- Paleness (due to a drop in blood pressure)
- Loss of consciousness

If you see someone showing any of these symptoms, **ACT FAST! Call 911**, mention anaphylaxis, and say

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