

FOOD ALLERGY INFORMATION

8 MOST COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS

The eight foods, identified by law, which account for 90% of food allergic reactions are:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish (bass, flounder, cod)
- Crustacean shellfish (crab, lobster, shrimp)
- Tree nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans)
- Peanuts
- Wheat
- Soybeans



LABELING OF ALLERGENS

Persons who have food allergies should be taught to read the labels of all food and avoid foods which cause allergy symptoms. The law requires that food labels identify each major food allergen in one of two ways:

1. In parentheses following the name of the ingredient (i.e. "lecithin (soy)," "flour (wheat)," and "whey (milk)")
2. Immediately after or next to the list of ingredients in a "contains statement."

KNOW YOUR SYMPTOMS

Most food allergies appear within a few minutes to two hours after eating a food item. Allergic reactions can include:

- Hives
- Flushed skin or rash
- Tingling or itching in the mouth
- Face, tongue or lip swelling
- Vomiting/diarrhea

- Abdominal cramps
- Coughing or wheezing
- Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
- Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of consciousness



NOTE: MILD SYMPTOMS CAN BECOME MORE SEVERE

For persons who eat foods they are allergic to, it can be life threatening and can cause anaphylaxis which can lead to:

- Constricted airways in the lungs
- Severely low blood pressure and shock— anaphylactic shock
- Death due to swelling of the throat

Each year in the U.S., it is estimated that anaphylaxis to food results in:

- 30,000 emergency room visits
- 2,000 hospitalizations
- 150 deaths

Immediate injections of epinephrine (i.e., Epi-pen) may help prevent the most serious consequences.



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