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## Food Allergies

By Steve Wilcott

An allergy can be described as a malfunction of the immune system, an exaggerated response to certain substances. Your body mistakenly believes that something it has touched, smelled or eaten is harmful to it and your body releases massive amounts of chemicals, such as histamine to protect itself.

It is believed that 11 million Americans suffer from food allergies. These allergies are as varied as food itself is. Some people suffer from an allergy to one food, some to many. The most common food allergies are generally eggs, milk, peanuts, tree nuts (such as walnuts), fish, shellfish, soy and wheat.

Symptoms of food allergies are varied and range from a tingling of the mouth to swelling of the tongue and throat to difficulty breathing to hives, cramps, diarrhea, vomiting and in some instances death.

There are ways to help you or your loved one manage your food allergies. First seek the help of an allergist. Your allergist will perform a patch test to determine the exact cause of allergic reactions. This will be the guideline you use as you develop a diet based around your food allergies.

As with other types of allergies there is no cure for a food allergy. Some children do grow out of some food allergies as they age although allergies to peanuts, fish, shellfish and nuts are often considered lifetime allergies. You or your loved one must simply avoid the food that causes the allergy. This can be difficult, especially when eating out in a restaurant. Depending on the severity of allergy, even slight cross contamination of food products can cause reactions.

Food labeling is a very important component of avoiding foods that trigger allergies. Since 2000 the FDA has been presenting information on allergy risks and labeling requirements to manufacturers. They seek to have manufacturers change some labels to be easier to read, using plain language like "milk" on a label instead of "caseinate".

In the case of a milk or egg allergy there are alternatives that can be used when cooking or baking. There are many online sites dedicated to supplying information, education and support to those with food allergies.

This article courtesy of

<http://www.allergies-questions.com>

### **Learning About Food Allergies**

**By Gray Rollins**

Food allergies affect approximately 4 million Americans with symptoms that can include difficulty breathing, an outbreak of hives, asthma, vomiting, and even death. Oftentimes food allergies are confused with an inability to tolerate certain foods. Food intolerance usually brings about an entirely different set of symptoms including a bloated feeling, gas, or other similar type of discomfort.

#### Food Allergies or Food Intolerance

An easy way to distinguish food allergies from food intolerances is to understand that an allergic reaction actually originates in a person's immune system. A severe allergic reaction can result in suffocation when the throat or the tongue swells so much that a person cannot breathe. Given the fact that approximately 150 people in the United States die each year from food allergies, this condition is no laughing matter.

Individuals with known food allergies usually inherit this condition from another member of the family. When food allergy patients are studied, it is common to see that conditions such as eczema, hay fever, and asthma affect other family members.

<http://www.withallergies.com/helpwithallergies/>

#### Foods That Cause Allergies

A few different kinds of foods seem to trigger the most allergic reactions. And it seems that adults and children each have a different set of foods that cause problems. The majority of food allergy cases in children involve peanuts, milk, eggs, soy and wheat. In adults, the foods most involved with allergies include shellfish (such as shrimp, crab and lobster), peanuts, walnuts, eggs, other fish and nuts that grow in trees.

Food allergies are so serious in some people that even smelling the food can trigger an allergic reaction. However, food allergies mostly become an issue after a person has eaten a food to which he or she is allergic. Symptoms can begin right at the point of entry with lips that begin to tingle or a tongue that begins to itch. Gastrointestinal trouble follows with cramping, or the need to vomit, or the development of diarrhea. As the troublesome food breaks down and enters the bloodstream, it travels towards the lungs and at that point conditions such as asthma, eczema, shortness of breath, or low blood pressure can all develop.

#### Dealing with Food Allergies

## Food Allergies

To protect themselves, people with known allergies to food simply have to avoid coming into contact with these foods. That sounds easy enough, however the reality is that it is not always possible to avoid the foods that cause problems. Processed foods can contain so many ingredients that sometimes the food culprit is buried deep in the fine print. Legislation aimed at improving food labeling as it pertains to food allergies has recently been enacted and hopefully these new labeling requirements will better protect those with food allergies.

Keeping children away from food allergens is difficult unless a parent is vigilant about what goes into the child's mouth. Parents of children with food allergies must inform everyone from school officials to

neighbors about the child's food allergies and even then, accidents happen. Fortunately for children with food allergies, most will outgrow this condition.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for

<http://www.withallergies.com>

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allergies, please visit

<http://www.withallergies.com/a/>

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