KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies can be serious. Knowing what to expect can help keep you safe.



A food allergy is different from a food intolerance[1]

Food allergy	VS	Food intolerance
What is it?		
• Happens when your body's defense system (immune system) reacts to food[1] • Can be dangerous and life-threatening[1]		• Happens when your body cannot break down certain foods[2] • You may be able to eat small amounts of the food without problems[2] • They are usually not life-threatening[2]
Symptoms can include (but are not limited to):		
• A very bad allergic reaction called *anaphylaxis*[3] • Trouble breathing or swallowing[3] • Itchy bumps (hives)[3] • Throwing up (vomiting)[3] • Stomach pain[3] • Feeling sick to your stomach (nausea)[3] • Loose stools (diarrhea)[3] • Feeling dizzy or weak[3] • Your pulse is weak[3]		• Stomach pain[2] • Gas[2] • Loose stools (diarrhea)[2] • Feeling sick to your stomach (nausea)[2] • Headache[2] • Feeling easily annoyed (irritability)[2]

Food allergy fast facts

More than 170 foods can cause food allergies.[4]

Some people are **allergic to more than one food**.[4]

9 most common food allergies[1]:

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (like walnuts or almonds)
- Milk
- Wheat
- Eggs
- Soy
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Sesame

Anaphylaxis is a severe, quick allergic reaction. It can be very dangerous and even cause death. Symptoms can happen minutes or hours after eating a food.

You may have trouble breathing, swollen lips or a drop in blood pressure. You may also throw up, have loose stools or stomach pain.[5]

If you think someone is having an anaphylactic reaction, **act fast**.

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STAYING SAFE WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Talk to your doctor if:

- You think you or your child has a food allergy
- You or your child had a bad reaction to food before
- You want to get tested for food allergies
- You want help on how to handle food allergies

What to do if someone is having a severe allergic reaction[6]

1. Use epinephrine **right away** if your doctor has prescribed it. Epinephrine is medicine that treats severe allergic reactions.
2. Call 911 for emergency help.
3. Stay with the person until help arrives.

Everyday tips to stay safe



Ask your doctor for medicine
If you do not have epinephrine, ask your doctor for a prescription.



Read labels carefully
Check what is in the food every time you buy or eat it.



Ask questions when eating out
Tell restaurant staff about the allergy and ask how the food is made.



Always carry your epinephrine
Always keep epinephrine with you if your doctor prescribed it.



Make a plan
Work with your doctor to make a plan for handling allergic reactions. Share this plan with your family and friends.

For more information about food allergy, talk to your doctor or scan the QR code to visit **FoodAllergy.org**.

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References: 1. Food Allergy Research & Education. What is a food allergy? Accessed April 8, 2026. https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/what-food-allergy **2.** Nemours KidsHealth. What's the difference between a food allergy and a food intolerance? Accessed April 8, 2026. https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/allergy-intolerance.html **3.** Food Allergy Research & Education. Recognizing and treating reaction symptoms. Accessed May 20, 2026. https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/recognizing-and-treating-reaction-symptoms **4.** Food Allergy Research & Education. Facts and statistics. Accessed May 20, 2026. https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/facts-and-statistics **5.** Food Allergy Research & Education. Anaphylaxis. Accessed May 20, 2026. https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/anaphylaxis **6.** Food Allergy Research & Education. Recognizing and responding to a reaction. Accessed May 20, 2026. https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/recognizing-and-responding-reaction

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