



Food Allergy FACTS

What are FOOD ALLERGIES?

- A food allergy is an abnormal response to a food triggered by the body's immune system.
- There is no cure for food allergies.

What causes food allergies?

- Food allergy symptoms occur when the individual is exposed to food allergen he or she is allergic to.
 - No food allergy symptoms occur on the first time a person is exposed to the food.
 - The first exposure primes the body to respond the next time, and an allergic response occurs during the following exposure.
- Major food allergens are: Milk, eggs, fish (e.g., bass, flounder, cod), crustacean shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp), tree nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans), peanuts, wheat, soybeans

How are signs & symptoms of food allergies treated?

- A severe, life-threatening allergic reaction is called **anaphylaxis**.
- A medication called an EPI-PEN is prescribed by a doctor for individuals known to have severe reactions to food allergies.

How can reactions to food allergies be prevented?

- Strict avoidance of food allergens
- Know mild & severe signs & symptoms of allergic reactions
- Read food labels prior to consumption
- If an individual is known to have severe reactions to food allergens, have an Epi-pen prescribed by a doctor on hand
- Know how and when to administer an Epi-pen
- Have an action plan to help guide allergy management under differing situations, especially in the event of a severe reaction

Mild Signs & Symptoms

Hives
Flushed skin or rash
Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
Face, tongue, or lip swelling
Vomiting and/or diarrhea
Abdominal cramps
Coughing or wheezing
Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
Difficulty breathing
Loss of consciousness

Severe Signs & Symptoms

Constricted airways in the lungs
Severe lowering of blood pressure and shock ("anaphylactic shock")
Suffocation by swelling of the throat

Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA
30333, USA
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)
TTY: (888) 232-6348
<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/>

National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases

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