

FARE
FoodAllergy.org

Your Guide to Food Allergy

Newly Diagnosed With a Food Allergy?
We Can Help.



Learning that you or your loved one has a food allergy can be scary and stressful. Food allergies are serious, but you can learn how to manage them safely.



FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education) is the leading non-profit group advocating for people with food allergy, raising awareness of the disease, and educating the community and the public to help patients stay safe. FARE is also the largest private funder of food allergy research.

Go to foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy for all the resources you need to learn about living well with food allergies.

FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education) is here for you and the more than 32 million Americans with food allergy. On the journey from diagnosis to living well with food allergies, you are not alone. **We're here to help, every step of the way.**



foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy

Three Important Things You Should Know

- 1. Always carry two epinephrine injectors with you,** and learn how and when to use this life-saving medicine. In a serious reaction, seconds count!
- 2. Not all reactions are the same.** You can have a life-threatening reaction to your problem food, even if you've never had a serious reaction before.
- 3. Any amount of a problem food can cause a serious reaction.** The only way to prevent a serious reaction is to avoid the food entirely.

STEP ONE

Educate Yourself and Others About Your Food Allergy

What Is a Food Allergy?

Food allergy happens when your body's immune defenses that normally fight disease attack a molecule in food, usually a protein. The food protein is called an **allergen**, and your body's response is called an **allergic reaction**.

A person with food allergy makes too much of a protein called **IgE** that can recognize the problem food. When the IgE and the food come into contact, a chemical called **histamine** is released and causes symptoms.

People can be allergic to any food,
but nine foods cause most food allergy reactions in the U.S.



milk



egg



wheat



finned fish



shellfish



peanut



tree nuts



soy



sesame

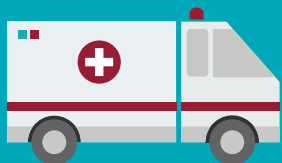
Food Allergy and Food Intolerance – What’s the Difference?

Food Allergy

- Immune system attacks a molecule in food, usually a protein (example: casein and whey proteins in milk)
- Can be life-threatening
- Can cause many symptoms throughout the body

Food Intolerance

- Digestive system has trouble breaking down a food (example: lactose, a natural sugar in milk)
- Is not life-threatening
- Usually limited to upset digestion, such as stomach pain or gas



40%

More than **40%** of children with food allergies have experienced a severe or life-threatening reaction



3.4 million

Each year in the U.S., **3.4 million people** visit the emergency room to treat severe food allergy reactions

Why Are Food Allergies Serious?

Food allergy reactions are unpredictable. They can be mild or very severe, and a reaction that starts out mild can quickly become life-threatening. Anyone having a food allergy reaction should be watched closely.

The most dangerous allergic reactions are called **anaphylaxis** (an-uh-fil-LAX-is). Anaphylaxis can cause death by making it hard to breathe or pump blood. The only treatment that can stop anaphylaxis is a medicine called epinephrine.

STEP TWO

Be Prepared With Epinephrine and an Emergency Plan

Epinephrine

Epinephrine, also called adrenaline, is a safe, easy-to-use, injectable medicine that can stop the symptoms of a severe allergic reaction.



- **Learn about epinephrine device options** from your health care provider and foodallergy.org/epi.
- **Have your medical professional train you** to use the device you want, and practice with a trainer device that has no needle and no medicine.
- **Always carry two epinephrine devices with you** in case one doesn't work or you need more than one dose of medicine.
- **Tell your friends where you keep your epinephrine** in case you need their help.
- **Visit foodallergy.org/epi** to learn about storing and replacing your epinephrine, opportunities to save money on epinephrine, and more.

A written **Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan** is your how-to guide for recognizing and treating reactions.

- **The plan includes:**
 - patient allergy and medical details
 - descriptions of mild and severe reaction symptoms
 - instructions for when to use epinephrine
 - instructions, including diagrams, for how to use each type of epinephrine device
- **Ask your health care provider** to fill out your Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan and talk about it with you.
- **Share the plan with schools and caregivers**, always carry a copy with you, and tell your friends where you keep your plan so they can help you manage a reaction.

You may also want to **wear medical identification** in case of emergency.

STEP THREE

Learn How to Recognize Symptoms and Treat Reactions

Be on the Lookout for Food Allergy Reactions

- The first symptoms of a reaction to food usually appear **between a few minutes and two hours** after exposure.
- Sometimes symptoms can come back hours after treatment; this is called a **biphasic reaction**.
- A reaction can involve one, two, several or many symptoms.
- Symptoms can affect different parts of the body and can be mild to very severe.

MILD SYMPTOMS INCLUDE



Nose: itchy or runny nose, sneezing



Mouth: itchy mouth



Skin: a few hives, mild itch



Gut: mild nausea or discomfort

SEVERE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE



Lung: shortness of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough



Heart: pale, blue, faint, weak pulse, dizzy



Throat: tight, hoarse, trouble breathing/swallowing



Mouth: significant swelling of the tongue or lips



Skin: many hives over body, widespread redness



Gut: repetitive vomiting or severe diarrhea



Psychological: feeling something bad will happen, anxiety, confusion

What Makes a Reaction Mild or Severe?

- A mild symptom in one area of the body is a **mild reaction**.
- Any severe symptom is a **severe reaction**.
- Mild symptoms in more than one body area are a **severe reaction**.

Which Reactions Should Be Treated With Epinephrine?

- All **severe reactions must be treated with epinephrine**, because we can't predict which severe reactions will become life-threatening.
- Your health care provider may recommend an antihistamine to treat mild reactions. **Antihistamines can't stop anaphylaxis and should never replace epinephrine.**

How Do I Treat a Severe Reaction?

- **INJECT EPINEPHRINE IMMEDIATELY!** Don't delay; seconds matter.
- Call 911. Use the word anaphylaxis when speaking with the dispatcher and explain that emergency responders may need to bring more epinephrine.
- Consider giving additional medications following epinephrine, such as an antihistamine or an inhaler (bronchodilator) to treat wheezing.
- Lay the person flat, raise their legs and keep them warm. If breathing is difficult or they are vomiting, let them sit up or lie on their side.
- If symptoms do not improve, or if symptoms return, more doses of epinephrine can be given about 5 minutes or more after the last dose.
- Alert emergency contacts.
- Transport person to the emergency room (ER), even if symptoms resolve. The person should remain in the ER for at least 4 hours because symptoms may return.

STEP FOUR

Avoid Problem Foods

Even the smallest amount of a food allergen can cause a severe reaction. The only way to prevent a food allergy reaction is to avoid the problem food. So how can you know that what you're eating is safe?

Learn How to Read Food Labels

- Always read the ingredient labels on packaged foods. Don't eat foods that aren't labeled.
- Read each label three times: when you buy the product, when you store the product at home, and when you take the product out to serve or cook it.
- Federal law names NINE food allergens that must be labeled on products: milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, crustacean shellfish (examples: shrimp, crabs), and sesame.
- Labels are not required for other food allergens, including mustard and molluscan shellfish (examples: clams, oysters). Some food allergens may be labeled as "natural flavors" or "spices".
- Some labels name food allergens that might be present (examples: "may contain peanuts," "made on shared equipment with wheat"). This **precautionary allergen labeling** isn't required by law. FARE recommends avoiding products that have precautionary allergen labeling for your problem foods.
- To learn more about food labeling, including tips to avoid common allergens, visit foodallergy.org/foodlabels.

Sodium	45mg	160.65mg	
Recommended Daily Allowances (United States)			
Vitamin A	0%	Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	15%	Iron	2%
Nutritional Information			
Ingredients: Sugar, non dairy creamer (corn syrup solids, coconut oil, sodium caseinate (a milk derivative), dipotassium phosphate, maltodextrin, mono- and diglycerides, tricalcium phosphate, silicon dioxide, carrageenan, soy lecithin, salt), whey protein, Arabica coffee, natural and artificial flavoring, tricalcium phosphate, salt.			
Allergen Information: Contains milk and soy.			



Beware of Cross-Contact

- Cross-contact happens when one food comes into contact with another food and their proteins mix. As a result, each food contains traces of the other food that are often too small to see.
- To avoid cross-contact:
 - Never eat food that has come in contact with your problem food.
 - Wash utensils and surfaces well with soap and water before they touch your food.
 - Wash your hands well with soap and water before preparing your food.
 - In a pinch, use commercial wipes to clean hands and surfaces; sanitizing gels and plain water don't remove food allergens.
- To learn more about cross-contact and how to avoid it, visit foodallergy.org/crosscontact.

What If I Can't Buy Safe Foods?

To avoid your problem foods and prevent life-threatening reactions you need affordable access to foods you can eat safely. There are programs that can help you access safe and affordable foods.

- Learn about allergy-friendly food banks and pantries at foodallergy.org/foodassistance.
- Check out federal food nutrition service programs at foodallergy.org/foodprograms.



FARE
Food Allergy Research & Education

Join the FARE Patient Registry

Your Unique Allergy Experiences Matter

The **FARE Patient Registry** works with researchers to turn your experiences into new treatments and better care for people with food allergies.



Step 1

Sign up online and create a confidential profile.



Step 2

Share your food allergy journey by completing online surveys.



Step 3

Stay in touch. Return to the Registry to share new experiences.

FARE is a non-profit that helps people living with food allergies. To find out more about **FARE** and join the **Patient Registry** please visit:

foodallergy.org/registry



Scan to join now

Visit
foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy
for more information.



Find Resources for Every Stage of Life

A food allergy diagnosis is life-changing, but it doesn't have to stop you from living well. Visit foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy to learn about safely managing food allergies at every stage of your journey, from infancy to adulthood:

- Preschools and childcare settings, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, workplaces
- Food allergy accommodations and disability law
- Dining out and socializing
- Traveling
- And much more

Get Connected and Stay Informed

Having a support system is important as you navigate how your life may change with food allergies.

- Find people in your area going through the same thing with FARE-Recognized Support Groups at foodallergy.org/supportgroups.
- Sign up for FARE news, product notices and ingredient alerts at foodallergy.org/signup.
- Connect with FARE and the food allergy community today.



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