

Food Allergies 101

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Food Allergies affect 15 million people in the United States and occur in 1 in 13 children. -Food Allergy Research & Education

Everything you need to know about food allergies

(Recipes included!)

Introduction:

Your body's immune system is a well-oiled machine that pinpoints and destroys any harmful bacteria or virus that could make you sick. However, sometimes the immune system makes a mistake. A **food allergy** occurs when the immune system accidentally targets and attacks a harmless food protein, also known as an **allergen**.

Food allergy vs. Intolerance

Reactions to food are common; but most of these reactions are actually due to intolerances, not food allergies. A food allergy is an **immune response** to a protein from a certain food. On the other hand, food intolerance does not involve an immune response, but can sometimes cause similar symptoms (usually digestive issues). While

Intolerances do not cause long-term issues, a food allergy can be severe or even fatal because it involves a whole-body reaction. **Common symptoms** of a food allergy include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, hives, itching, tingling mouth, swelling of the lips, tongue, face, and throat, and even anaphylaxis. **Anaphylaxis** is a life threatening reaction causing breathing difficulty and low blood pressure.

The Big Eight: Representing 90% of all food allergies

1. Peanuts
2. Tree nuts
3. Milk
4. Egg
5. Wheat
6. Soy
7. Fish
8. Shellfish



Testing for food allergies

Never self-diagnose! This can lead to unnecessary restriction, inadequate nutrition, and a misdiagnosis of an underlying condition. If you suspect that your child has a food allergy, contact a board-certified allergist. Diagnostic tests include: skin prick test, blood test, oral food challenge, and trial elimination diets.

For more information on diagnostic tests, visit www.foodallergy.org/diagnosis-and-testing.

Over 25% of all kids with food allergies will outgrow them! -USA Today



Managing food allergies

Following the diagnosis of a food allergy, talk to your doctor about setting up an **emergency care plan**. Mild symptoms such as hives or itching can generally be treated with topical steroids or antihistamines. If a severe reaction such as anaphylaxis is possible, your child should have an **epinephrine pen** (EpiPen) available at all times. Always read the instructions and be prepared! Once epinephrine has been administered, immediately take your child to the emergency room in case additional treatment is necessary.

In general, **strict avoidance** of the offending food is recommended to prevent symptoms. Make sure you carry necessary **medication** with you at all times. Finally, when you go to a **restaurant**, always alert your server about your child's allergy!



Important: Eliminating anything from a child's diet can put him/her at risk for **inadequate nutrition** and **poor growth**. If your child has a food allergy, you may need to get creative and find **substitutions** for the food you have eliminated.

Attached are two nutritious, delicious, and allergy-friendly recipes. For more information on food allergies and fun recipe ideas, visit the following websites:

<http://community.kidswithfoodallergies.org/pages/community>
<http://www.allergykids.org>
<http://www.foodallergy.org>
<http://www.mayoclinic.org>

Recipes...Yum!!

Blueberry (or Banana) Oat Pancakes

Wheat, dairy, nut, and Egg-free

Ingredients:

1 cup oat flour

2 tsp baking powder

¼ tsp salt

Egg substitute (equivalent to 1 egg)

½ to ¾ cup liquid (water, soy milk, juice)

1 Tbsp oil

1 Tbsp honey or other sweetener

½ cup frozen blueberries, thawed, or 1 large banana cut into thin slices



Instructions:

1. Stir oat flour, baking powder, and salt together in medium bowl. Add egg substitute, ½ of the liquid of choice, oil, honey, and blueberries. Mix well. If the batter is too sticky, add in more liquid of choice.
2. Pour by spoonfuls into medium hot pan or griddle. Bake on one side and flip to cook the other side
3. Serve with maple syrup or plain (great bite-size treats for small children!)

Meat and Potato Tots

Wheat, dairy, nut, and egg-free

Ingredients:

2-3 medium-sized potatoes

¼-½ cup chicken stock

½ pound cooked ground meat of choice

Soy or Almond milk (to taste)

Salt and pepper (to taste)

Margarine (to taste)

Optional: add in any cooked veggies



Instructions

1. Preheat the oven for 375°F
2. Peel and boil the potatoes until soft. Mash potatoes and add salt, pepper, and margarine, chicken stock, cooked ground meat, milk substitute to taste, and any cooked veggies you want
3. Line a baking sheet with wax paper and fill a piping bag or plastic bag with a hole in the bottom with your potato mixture.
4. Pipe your mixture onto the baking sheet, using whatever shape you want (dots, lines, swirls...anything!)
5. Bake until tops are golden brown
6. After they have cooled, feel free to freeze for later use