

Food Allergies and Intolerances

Food Allergies Defined:

A food allergy is the body's immune system response to a food it believes is harmful. Once the immune system decides that a particular food is harmful, it creates antibodies that react to it. The next time a person eats the food, the body releases chemicals to fight it and protect the body. These chemicals trigger the allergic reaction.

Common Food Allergens:

The following list account for up to 90% of all allergic reactions. They are usually caused by the proteins in these foods.

Cow's Milk	Eggs
Peanuts	Tree nuts
Fish	Shellfish
Soy	Wheat

Common Allergic Reactions:

Moderate:

- Skin irritations such as hives, eczema, or rashes
- Gastrointestinal problems such as nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Sneezing, runny nose, or shortness of breath

Severe:

Anaphalaxis, a rare but potentially fatal condition in which more than one part of the body experiences an allergic reaction. The first signs of anaphalaxis may be a feeling of warmth, flushing, tingling in the mouth, or a red rash. Other symptoms may include dizziness, light-headedness, cramps, or anxiety. In the most sever cases, patients may experience a drop in blood pressure that results in a loss of consciousness or shock. Immediate medical attention is necessary, and treatment often includes an injection of epinephrine (adrenaline).

Food Intolerances Defined:

A food intolerance is often confused with a food allergy. Food intolerance is an adverse reaction to a food substance or food additive that involves digestion or metabolism, but not the immune system. Reactions are generally localized, temporary, and rarely life-threatening.

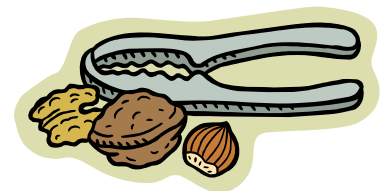
Common Food Intolerances:

Food intolerance reactions are usually caused by factors in the diet other than the proteins. Here are some common intolerances:

- Lactose
- Caffeine
- Food additives such as benzoates, BHT, BHA, FD&C dyes, monosodium glutamate (MSG), nitrates, nitrites, parabens, and sulfites
- Corn and its derivatives

Common Reactions:

- Nervousness
- Uncomfortable abdominal symptoms such as gas, bloating, and pain
- Headaches
- Occasionally hives
- In rare cases, asthma



Treatment:

- 1) Consult with an allergist/immunologist to determine if you are experiencing an allergy or an intolerance.
- 2) Avoid the foods that trigger a reaction.
- 3) Ask about ingredients wherever you are eating.
- 4) Read food labels and become familiar with technical, scientific, or industry names for foods or by-products.
- 5) Be prepared for emergencies! If you have an allergy, carry an epi-pen or antihistamine and know how to use them in case of accidental ingestion. Wear an ID bracelet that describes the allergy. If it's an intolerance and you experience asthma, be prepared with an inhaler. Seek medical treatment in either case.