



Nutrition Bits and Bites!

"Food Allergies"



What is an allergic reaction?

It is when the body reacts to a protein or irritant (allergen). It can start as a mild reaction and develop into a severe reaction in seconds. The reaction may be caused by food, insect stings, environment, and medications.

Food allergies are triggered when your body's immune system mistakenly identifies a food protein to be harmful. Exposure to even the smallest amounts of allergenic protein can cause a serious allergic reaction in sensitive individuals. This is why you need to be very careful when packing school lunches for your children. (Health Canada 2012)

What is cross-contamination (also known as cross-contact)

These terms are used to describe the presence of an allergen that is transferred from one food or object to another. For example, cookies baked on the same tray as peanut butter cookies cause a risk of cross-contamination to someone with peanut allergy.

Substitutes for School Lunches and Snacks

It is important to check with your student's classroom for a safe food list. The schools are not asking students to eliminate these foods from their diet. It is just asked that these high risk foods be consumed at home.

- Always read the ingredients section of the label to identify if the product is free of the allergen.
- Don't pack any food with ingredients that are restricted at your school.
- Remember, even trace amounts can cause a severe allergic reaction.

Check Food Labels



Labelling of "hidden" priority allergens

Parents and consumers should look for the allergen in the ingredient list. Parts of an ingredient like spices may be in brackets, or look for a "contains" statement after the ingredients, like "Contains: Milk, wheat, egg, peanut".

For more information on Food allergen label regulations, check out this link: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/allergen/index-eng.php>

Food Labels



REFERENCE: whyriskit? Anaphylaxis Canada

<http://www.whyriskit.ca/reading-labels.html>

- **Check one...Check two...Check three** Ingredient lists are not always the easiest thing to read with such small font, two languages and often a crinkled package. Make sure to double check the label before you consume any product. Even if you have eaten it before, it is a good idea to check the label every time, in case manufacturing practices or ingredients have changed.
- **Manufacturers are friendly...Call them!** Unsure about a product? Get to the bottom of it! It will save you a lot of worry in the long-run knowing if you can eat something or not. Contact food manufacturers and ask if there is the potential for cross-contamination with their product and your allergens. <http://foodallergycanada.ca/>
- **Product Recalls Can Occur** Product recalls due to undeclared allergens do happen in Canada. The CFIA (Canadian Food & Inspection Agency) monitors and alerts consumers when any of the [10 priority allergens](#) are not declared on a package. Stay in the loop on product recalls through Anaphylaxis Canada's registry. <http://foodallergycanada.ca/programs-services/allergy-information-service/>.

Allergen Substitutions

Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Water, Rice milk, Almond milk, pecan milk, cashew milk, brazil nut milk, walnut milk, fruit juice, fortified soy milk.</i> NOTE: (These substitutions may be used to achieve the same taste as milk, however should not be used to replace calcium. Regular milk and fortified soy milk have the same amount of calcium, but the other substitutions do not.) • <i>Sour cream—4 tablespoons of starch (corn starch, rice starch, or potato starch) mixed with 3/4 cup water and 1/4 cup vinegar for each cup of sour cream required.</i> • <i>Desserts that are traditionally made with milk, such as tapioca, sago or rice pudding, can be made with fruit juice instead.</i>
Egg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial egg replacements, e.g. Ener-G Egg Replacer • For every egg white, use 1 tbsp of ground flaxseed and 3 tbsp water. Bring to a boil. Then refrigerate. 1 tbsp of this mix = 1 egg • 2 oz Tofu = 1 egg • 1 Banana = 1 egg in cakes • 2 tbsp potato starch = 1 egg • 2 tbsp arrowroot powder = 1 egg
Wheat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In place of wheat flour, combinations of alternate flours work better than single flour alone. • Rye, oat and barley flour produce a better product than rice, tapioca, and other grains because they contain gluten and have more fibre.

For more nutrition topics, go to the news and events section of www.southernhealth.ca or

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