



THE PEANUT ALLERGEN

*According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, about 0.6% of the American population has a peanut allergy.

WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

- An immune system reaction that occurs soon after eating a certain food.
- The allergy-causing food can trigger signs and symptoms such as digestive problems, hives or swollen airways.
- A food allergy can cause severe symptoms or even a life-threatening reaction known as anaphylaxis in some people.

THE BIG NINE FOOD ALLERGENS

To protect those with food allergies and other food hypersensitivities, the FDA enforces regulations requiring companies to list ingredients on packaged foods and beverages.

The law identified the following nine foods as major food allergens:

SHELLFISH

MEAT

EGGS

MILK

WHEAT

SOY

TREE NUTS

PEANUTS

SESAME SEEDS

DISCUSSION QUESTION

**WILL SMELLING OR
TOUCHING PEANUT
BUTTER CAUSE
ANAPHYLAXIS?**



- Research does not support skin contact or airborne peanut butter exposure as a source of anaphylaxis, though hay fever type reactions may occur.* Most instances of anaphylaxis are the result of accidental ingestion of peanut proteins, or exposure through the eyes or mouth.
- A study of 30 peanut allergic children who smelled peanut butter for 10 minutes resulted in zero reactions. Skin contact in this study also resulted in zero life-threatening reactions; redness and irritation occurred for some where the peanut butter touched the skin. (Simonte S., 2003)
- Further research found that washing hands with soap and water and using common household cleaners on surfaces can remove peanut proteins to mitigate cross contact. (Perry T., 2004)
- More recently, allergists documented their practice of placing peanut butter near peanut allergic patients to show them that just being near peanut foods does not cause anaphylaxis. Similarly, they applied peanut butter to the skin of allergic patients. In their article, the clinicians reported that none of their patients has experienced a systemic reaction and only one had a hive at the site of application. (Dinakar C., 2016)



Peanut Allergy Prevention:

- Introduce infants to appropriate peanut foods starting at 4-6 months for high risk infants (those with eczema or a previous reaction to milk or eggs). Research shows early introduction reduces likelihood of developing peanut allergy by 86% among high-risk infants.
- The 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that all infants be introduced to peanuts within the first year of life.
- Once introduced, appropriate peanut foods should be fed at least 3 times per week (about 2 teaspoons per serving).

Peanut Allergy Treatment



- Once a physician diagnoses a peanut allergy, a treatment plan is essential.
- Epinephrine is an approved treatment for anaphylaxis that should be administered without delay
- Oral immunotherapy can aid in increasing tolerance to peanuts through a controlled environment. Doctors prescribe gradual amounts of peanut protein.

Symptoms of a Peanut Allergy

- Vomiting
- Stomach cramps
- Indigestion
- Diarrhea
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Repetitive cough
- Tightness in throat, hoarse voice
- Weak pulse
- Pale or blue coloring of the skin
- Hives
- Swelling, can affect the tongue and/or lips
- Dizziness
- Confusion



Did you know?

- Refined peanut oil does not contain the peanut protein and does not pose a risk to people with peanut allergies.
- Chick-fil-A is the United State's single largest buyer of peanut oil. They use 100% refined peanut oil to pressure cook all of its breaded chicken.
- Banning peanuts in schools does not reduce the risk of exposure but may increase the risk for reactions. Bans give a false sense of security and are not recommended by healthcare professionals.
- Studies show that 20-25% of children that have a peanut allergy will outgrow it. Of those that outgrow the allergy, 80% do so by the age of eight.

Video Resource: Searching for an end to Peanut Allergies



References

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