

Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

Food Allergies and Labels



What do milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, and soybeans have in common? If you guessed they are the most common food allergens, accounting for at least 90% of all food allergies – you are correct.

About 8% of all children and about 4% of adults experience food allergies; but, what exactly is a food allergy? A food allergy is an abnormal response to a food triggered by the immune system. If a person has a food allergy, the body recognizes the food as a threat and seeks to destroy it. To do so, the body produces immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies after the first exposure. The next time a person is exposed to the food, the body will attempt to destroy it, causing an allergic reaction.

The term “exposed” has several meanings. Exposure can occur without anyone knowing. A person can be exposed by eating, touching, or smelling a food. Some people must eat a food allergen to have an allergic reaction, while others may only need to smell or touch a food allergen to have an allergic reaction.

Symptoms can occur within minutes to hours. The symptoms of an allergic reaction can include itching and swelling of the tongue and throat, tingling sensation in the mouth, runny nose, itchy watery eyes, hives, eczema, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Anaphylaxis is the most severe type of allergic reaction. During anaphylaxis, different systems of the body react at the same time. Symptoms appear and progress quickly and may include severe itching, swelling of the throat, difficulty in breathing, low blood pressure, diarrhea, loss of consciousness, shock, and even death. Anaphylaxis requires immediate medical treatment with epinephrine because it can be life threatening.

There is no cure for food allergies. No medication can be taken to prevent allergic reactions. The best way to eliminate allergic reactions is to avoid the food. For example, if a child has a milk

allergy, the physician would recommend avoiding milk and milk products such as yogurt and ice cream, as well as any food that contains milk proteins, including some processed items. This is why reading food labels is so important.



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Regulations Governing Food Allergy Labeling

There are regulations to assist you with purchasing safe foods for children who may have food allergies, such as the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) of 2004. The FALCPA of 2004 requires food manufacturers to list the eight common food allergens in one of two forms.

Form #1: The allergen can be listed in parentheses after the item in the list, as shown in the example below.

Ingredients: All-purpose flour (wheat), water, chicken, cream (milk), salt, albumin (egg), vegetable starch (wheat), carrots, onions, tomatoes

Form #2: A statement can appear near the ingredient's list that states the food contains one of the major allergens, as shown in the example below.

Contains Wheat, Milk, Egg, and Soy

Alternative Names and "May Contain" Common Allergens

Most allergens have alternative names. While it is a requirement for manufacturers to list the common allergen names on the label, it is good to know some of the alternative names. In addition, it is good to know different foods that may contain the allergens. Take a look at the box below that lists some alternative names and foods that may contain common allergens.

Common Allergen	Alternative Names	May Contain the Allergen
Milk	Casein, Cream, Custard, Ghee, Lactoferrin, Rennet Casein, Whey	Artificial Butter Flavor, Chocolate, Luncheon Meat, Nisin, Nougat
Egg	Albumin, Apovitellin, Globulin, Lysozyme, Mayonnaise, Ovalbumin	Baked Goods, Lecithin, Macaroni, Nougat, Pasta
Fish	Bass, Cod, Halibut, Salmon, Trout, Tuna	Worcestershire Sauce, Imitation or Artificial Fish, Meatloaf, BBQ Sauce
Shellfish	Barnacle, Crab, Crawfish, Krill, Lobster, Prawn, Shrimp	Bouillabaisse, Fish Stock, Glucosamine, Seafood Flavoring
Tree Nuts	Almond, Beechnut, Brazil Nut, Coconut, Nut Butter, Nut Meal	Black Walnut Hull Extract, Natural Nut Extract, Nut Oils, Walnut Hull

Common Allergen	Alternative Names	May Contain the Allergen
Wheat	Bulgar, Couscous, Durum, Emmer, Flour, Farina, Seitan, Spelt, Tritical	Glucose Syrup, Soy Sauce, Starch, Surimi
Peanuts	Artificial Nuts, Goobers, Ground Nuts, Nut Meat Peanut Flour	Baked Goods, Candy, Chili, Egg Rolls, Enchilada Sauce, Nougat
Soybeans	Edamame, Miso, Natto, Tamari, Tempeh, Tofu	Vegetable Broth, Vegetable Gum, Vegetable Starch

Source: Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) <http://www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=133>

Label Statements

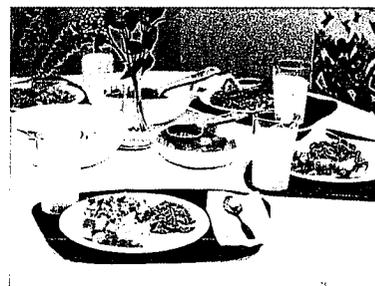
The “may contain”, “same equipment as [allergen]”, or “made in the same facility as [allergen]” statements are very important statements. The food product may have traces of an allergen that could cause an allergic reaction. Often “same equipment as [allergen]” or “made in the same facility as [allergen]” can be found on food packages and on postings at restaurants. While the statements are not federally required to be listed on food packages, it is important to avoid any foods with this statement.

Tips for Reading Food Labels

- Read the entire food label, not just the list of ingredients, each time a food is purchased and prepared because the ingredients may change between shopping.
- If you cannot understand the label, contact the manufacturer.
- If ever in doubt about a certain label, do not purchase and/or serve the food.

Nutrition Tip of the Month

It is Family Style Dining Time! Make mealtimes special times and serve meals family style. Allow children to serve themselves, using child size serving bowls and child size serving spoons. Use colorful child size utensils, such as red plates, yellow bowls, pink cups, and green spoons. Include tablecloths and bouquets of flowers in plastic vases. Talk with the children about the origins, colors, shapes, and types of each food.



Nutrition Fact of the Month

When shopping, have you seen terms, such as “fat-free” or “sugar free” and wondered the meaning? The US Food and Drug Administration sets standards to help shoppers find foods that are rich in nutrients. Listed below are some common terms and their meanings that you may find on food packages.

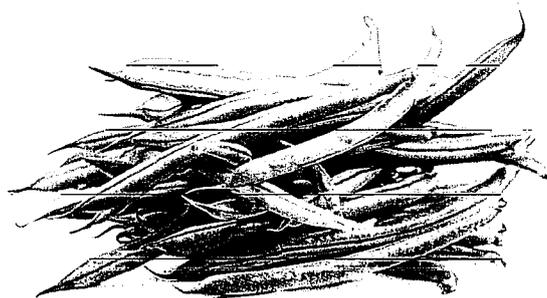
- Fat-Free – Per serving, there is less than ½ gram of fat
- Calorie Free – Per serving, there is less than 5 calories
- Low Sodium– Per serving, there is 140 mg or less of sodium
- Sugar Free – Per serving, there is less than ½ gram of sugar



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Vegetable of the Month

It's Veggie Time! The vegetable of the month is the Green Bean. Green beans have been harvested since 5000-6000 BC. There are over 130 different types of green beans. Also known as snap beans, they are high in vitamin K, vitamin C, and dietary fiber. Green beans can be green, purple, yellow, or speckled with these colors. Introduce green beans by reading books, inviting a local farmer, or bringing fresh green beans in for children to view.



It's News Time

National Association for Family Child Care

The National Association for Family Child Care will host their 23rd annual conference on July 18-20, 2013 in Scottsdale, AZ. This year's theme is “Building Relationships that Last a Lifetime.” The keynote speakers are Dr. Ross A. Thompson and Lili Leninowitz. NAFCC will have a variety of trainings and workshops. Register today for the conference at <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e79gx09d7674bdb9&llr=yatrx4cab>

CACFP Rock Star of the Month

The CACFP Rock Star of the Month is Ms. Cindy Ely. Ms. Ely is the cook at a child care center in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. Ms. Ely manages the entire Child and Adult Care Food Program, including planning, purchasing, preparing, serving, and submitting for reimbursement. She voluntarily works directly with the Center's Parental Advisory Board to plan all meals. Through a collaboration with a parent/farmer, she purchases all fruits and vegetables local and fresh. In addition to this collaboration, she works with the local high school to mentor aspiring cooks. Ms. Ely is known for having the energy of an action figure, the charisma of a super hero, and the skills and creativity of an artist.



Congratulations Ms. Ely! You are truly a CACFP Rock Star.

Sources

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