# FOCUS ON

**FOOD ALLERGIES** 

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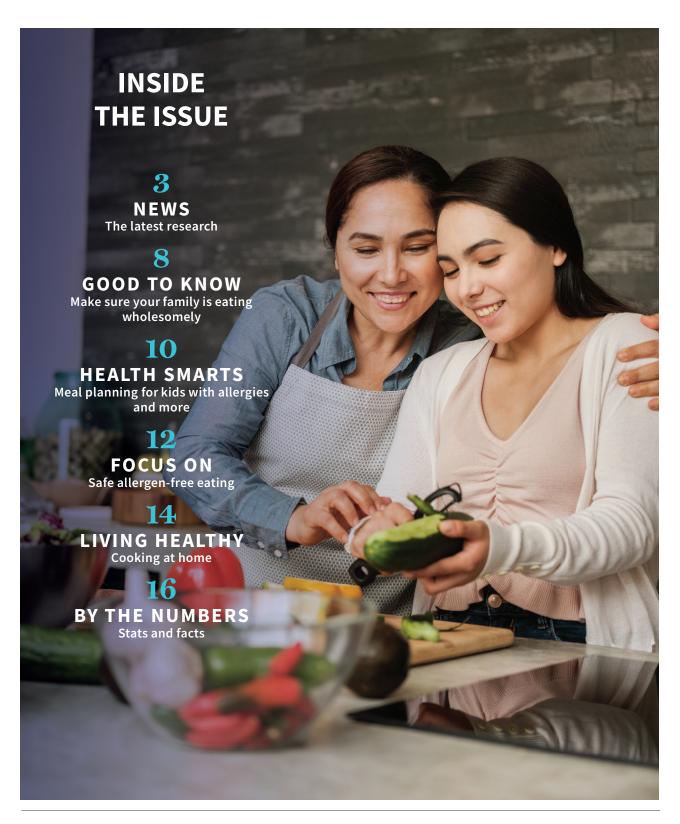
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**FALL 2025** 



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#### WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?

Food allergies can affect any community, but some face bigger challenges than others. A national survey of over 51,000 homes in the U.S. found that food allergies were more common in Black, Hispanic, and Asian households than in White households-and often come with more severe reactions and higher rates of emergency room visits. Families with lower incomes also reported higher rates of food allergies. Factors such as environmental exposure (such as dust mites or cockroaches) and limited access to allergy-safe foods could also be possible contributors. These findings highlight the need for increased awareness, support, and access to care.

SOURCE: JAMA Network Open

Amount of caregivers in the U.S. who believe a food allergy diagnosis has a significant impact on daily life.

SOURCE: Food Allergy Research & Education

# 33 millinn

Number of people in the U.S. who have food allergies.

SOURCE: Food Allergy Research & Education

#### WHEN CAUTION ADDS STRESS

Could your efforts to protect your family from food allergies be adding more stress than relief? A study examined how excluding common allergens such as peanuts or tree nuts from the home affects the emotional well-being of families. It showed that caregivers who excluded allergen-containing foods to stay safe often reported higher levels of anxiety, more stress, and less confidence in managing allergies than those who did not. Some teens in these homes were also more likely to have increased anxiety. If this sounds all too familiar to you, researchers suggest talking to your doctor about practical, balanced strategies that may ease this burden.

SOURCE: JAMA Network Open

#### SUPPORT BEYOND HOME OR CLINIC

Living with food allergies can be tough on teens because they often feel left out and lack age-specific support. To address this gap, a survey was given to 68 teen participants and 74 caregivers involved with Teen Talks, a free, monthly, video-based peer support program open to youth nationwide. Here, adolescents ages 11 to 22 with food allergies connect, share experiences, and talk through everyday challenges. The results showed high acceptability, with over 90% saying they would recommend the program to others. Participants reported feeling more connected, less isolated, and more confident in managing their allergies. If your teen could benefit from this program, visit www.foodallergy.org to find out more.

SOURCE: Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology



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#### Food allergy accidents can happen. XOLAIR can help.

















XOLAIR can help significantly reduce food allergy reactions, including anaphylaxis, that may occur after accidentally eating one or more foods to which you are allergic.

While taking XOLAIR, you should continue to practice food avoidance.

XOLAIR is taken by injection once or twice a month as part of a food allergy management plan.



Ask an allergist about XOLAIR and scan to learn more.



#### What is XOLAIR?

XOLAIR® (omalizumab) for subcutaneous use is an injectable prescription medicine used to treat food allergy in people 1 year of age and older to reduce allergic reactions that may occur after accidentally eating one or more foods to which you are allergic. While taking XOLAIR you should continue to avoid all foods to which you are allergic. It is not known if XOLAIR is safe and effective in people with food allergy under 1 year of age.

XOLAIR should not be used for the emergency treatment of any allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.

#### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION**

#### What is the most important information I should know about XOLAIR?

Severe allergic reaction. A severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis can happen when you receive XOLAIR. The reaction can occur after the first dose, or after many doses. It may also occur right after a XOLAIR injection or days later. Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening condition and can lead to death. Go to the nearest emergency room right away if you have any of these symptoms of an allergic reaction:

- wheezing, shortness of breath, cough, chest tightness, or trouble breathing
- · low blood pressure, dizziness, fainting, rapid or weak heartbeat, anxiety, or feeling of "impending doom"
- flushing, itching, hives, or feeling warm
- swelling of the throat or tongue, throat tightness, hoarse voice, or trouble swallowing

Your healthcare provider will monitor you closely for symptoms of an allergic reaction while you are receiving XOLAIR and for a period of time after treatment is initiated. Your healthcare provider should talk to you about getting medical treatment if you have symptoms of an allergic reaction.

#### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)**

Do not receive and use XOLAIR if you are allergic to omalizumab or any of the ingredients in XOLAIR.

Before receiving XOLAIR, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have a latex allergy or any other allergies (such as seasonal allergies). The needle cap on the XOLAIR prefilled syringe contains a type of natural rubber latex.
- have sudden breathing problems (bronchospasm)
- have ever had a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis
- have or have had a parasitic infection
- have or have had cancer
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if XOLAIR may harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if XOLAIR passes into your breast milk. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby while you receive and use XOLAIR.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Please see full Prescribing Information, including Medication Guide, for additional Important Safety Information.



Meet Lauren, who takes XOLAIR to treat her food allergies, and Margaret, who cares for her son who has food allergies.

Lauren has a milk allergy and remembers having severe reactions from food cross-contamination at parties when she was young.

"I was taking some sort of rescue medications for accidental exposure to milk 1 out of every 3 times I ate out at a restaurant."



Margaret's son, Matthew, had a severe reaction to an ice cream candy that led to him being tested for food allergies.

"It felt paralyzing for our whole family . . . and I questioned, as Matthew's parent, what his future was going to look like. His allergist recommended XOLAIR as a monthly injection."



Scan to hear more real-life food allergy stories. Watch them all at XOLAIR.com/FAstories.

Lauren is an actual patient.

Margaret is a caregiver of an actual patient.

They received compensation to share their stories. Individual results may vary.

#### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)**

#### How should I receive and use XOLAIR?

- When starting treatment, XOLAIR should be given by your healthcare provider in a healthcare setting.
- If your healthcare provider decides that you or a caregiver may be able to give your own XOLAIR prefilled syringe or autoinjector injections, you should receive training on the right way to prepare and inject XOLAIR.
- Do not try to inject XOLAIR until you have been shown the right way to give XOLAIR prefilled syringe or autoinjector injections by a healthcare provider. Use XOLAIR exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- The XOLAIR autoinjector (all doses) is intended for use only in adults and adolescents aged 12 years and older. For children 12 years of age and older, XOLAIR prefilled syringe or autoinjector may be self-injected under adult supervision. For children 1 to 11 years of age, XOLAIR prefilled syringe should be injected by a caregiver.
- See the detailed Instructions for Use that comes with XOLAIR for information on the right way to prepare and inject XOLAIR.
- XOLAIR is given in 1 or more injections under the skin (subcutaneous), 1 time every 2 or 4 weeks.
- In people with food allergy, a blood test for a substance called IgE must be performed before starting XOLAIR to determine the appropriate dose and dosing frequency.
- Do not decrease or stop taking any of your food allergy medicine or allergen immunotherapy, unless your healthcare providers tell you to.
- You may not see improvement in your symptoms right away after XOLAIR treatment. If your symptoms do not improve or get worse, call your healthcare provider.
- If you inject more XOLAIR than prescribed, call your healthcare provider right away.

#### Start a conversation about XOLAIR with your allergist

It's essential to have a plan of action for you or your child that can evolve as life changes. If you're interested in learning more about how XOLAIR can help treat food allergies, speak to your allergist. Bring your own questions or start with some of these:

	Can XOL	AIR help	achieve r	ny/my	child's	treatment	goals?
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- ✓ How does XOLAIR work?
- ☑ What results can I expect to see after starting XOLAIR?
- Where would I receive my XOLAIR treatments, and how long do they typically take?
- ☑ What are the potential side effects of XOLAIR?

No matter how much we try to avoid them, accidental food exposure can still happen. XOLAIR may help. Talk to an allergist today.

#### **IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)**

#### What are the possible side effects of XOLAIR?

XOLAIR may cause serious side effects, including:

- Cancer. Cases of cancer were observed in some people who received XOLAIR
- Fever, muscle aches, and rash. Some people get these symptoms 1 to 5 days after receiving a XOLAIR injection. If you have any of these symptoms, tell your healthcare provider.
- Parasitic infection. Some people who are at a high risk for parasite (worm) infections, get a parasite infection after receiving XOLAIR. Your healthcare provider can test your stool to check if you have a parasite infection.
- Heart and circulation problems. Some people who receive XOLAIR have had chest pain, heart attack, blood clots in the lungs or legs, or temporary symptoms of weakness on one side of the body, slurred speech, or altered vision. It is not known whether these are caused by XOLAIR.

The most common side effects of XOLAIR in people with food allergy: injection site reactions and fever.

These are not all the possible side effects of XOLAIR. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to the FDA at (800) FDA-1088 or <a href="https://www.fda.gov/medwatch">www.fda.gov/medwatch</a>. You may also report side effects to Genentech at (888) 835-2555 or Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation at (888) 669-6682.

Please see full Prescribing Information, including Medication Guide, for additional Important Safety Information.

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# STAYING HEALTHY

How to make sure your family is eating wholesomely with food allergies

By Rachel Reiff Ellis Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

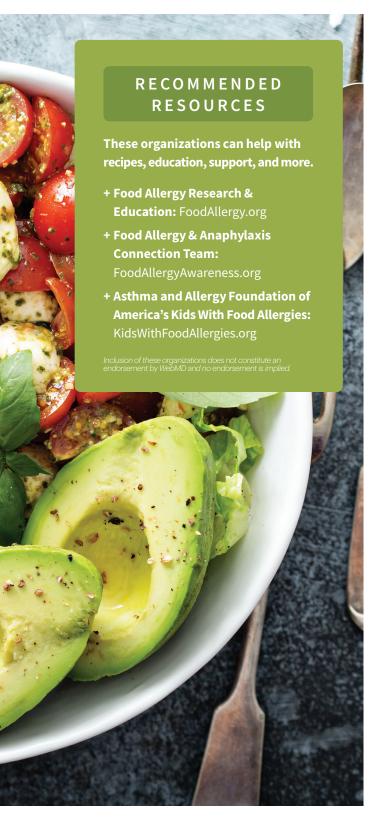
ecent studies show that children with food allergies tend to be smaller than other children—and when they're allergic to multiple foods, that decreases their size more. Nutrients are essential for normal growth and development, which is why it's important to figure out what your family's diet might be missing as you steer clear of allergens, so you can find other sources for a balanced, nutritious diet.

#### **NUTRIENT KNOW-HOW**

What common allergens provide (and what you should boost elsewhere).

- + Milk. Protein, calcium, riboflavin, phosphorus, vitamins A, D, B12
- + Eggs. Protein, iron, biotin, folic acid, riboflavin, vitamins A, D, E, B12
- + Wheat. B vitamins, iron
- + Peanuts/Tree nuts. Protein, vitamins, minerals
- + Fish/Shellfish. Protein, niacin, vitamins B6, B12, A, E
- + Soy. Protein, thiamin, riboflavin, iron, calcium, zinc, vitamin B6





Consider your gaps and overlaps, says Tiffany Leon, a registered dietitian and assistant director of training and professional programs at FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education).

"When you remove a food, think about the macronutrients involved, like protein and fats, as well as the micronutrients like calcium, vitamin D, or chlorine that you would be getting," she says.

#### **PICK UP THE PROTEIN**

If nuts, legumes, eggs, fish, or milk are off the table, so are some key dietary proteins. Be sure you're getting plenty of other protein foods like meat, poultry, seeds, and quinoa.

Pay attention to which plant-based option you choose for a milk substitute, says.

Oat, almond, hemp, and rice beverages range in protein content, so choosing the best one can be tricky, Leon says. A plant-based beverage like almond is traditionally very low in protein, so if you're [looking for a] milk substitute as a protein source, then a pea protein beverage would be better suited for the task.

#### **BOOST B VITAMINS**

When wheat is a no-go, look for alternative options for B vitamins: niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and others. Luckily, you can take a look in any supermarket and see plenty of alternatives, says Leon.

"You see so many different flours in things: cereals, crackers, even breads," she says.

Make sure the substitute you choose doesn't contain another of your allergens. Gluten-free breads, for example, have a different shelf life than wheat breads, so they may need more preservatives, extra eggs, or extra sugar coming from different sources.

#### **WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS**

When you're lacking certain nutrients in your diet, your body has ways of letting you know. Watch for certain signs.

"Clues that you're not getting adequate nutrition include weight loss in adults or children, and no weight gain or growth in height among children," says Jennifer A. Regan, MD, PhD, an allergist/immunologist at Northwest Asthma & Allergy Center in Issaquah, WA.

The key is to find favorites in allergen-free foods that enhance your diet.

"There are so many fruits and vegetables and wheat-free, gluten-free grains and other protein sources that you can have a very healthy diet even if you can't have certain foods," Leon says.

## TOP 9

#### These food allergens account for 90% of all food allergy reactions in the U.S.

By Rachel Reiff Ellis Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

When you come into contact with a food you're allergic to, it can cause hives, an upset stomach, or trouble breathing. The key is to know your allergens well so you can avoid them. Here are some examples:



#### **MEAL PLANNING FOR KIDS WITH ALLERGIES**

Grocery shopping is a great opportunity for parents and teens to team up—especially when food allergies are part of the picture. Learn to read food labels together, and go over awareness about hidden allergens in everyday items, including over-the-counter medications. Shared routines not only help prevent allergic reactions, but also teach teens how to advocate for their health in the real world.

Allergen	Nutritional Need	Possible Swaps
Milk	Calcium, Protein	Fortified plant-based milk (almond, soy, oat), calcium-fortified orange juice, fortified tofu, broccoli, spinach, fortified cereal
Eggs	Protein	Egg replacers, tofu (in smoothies or baking), soy yogurt, beans, lean meats (chicken, turkey)
Wheat	Carbohydrates	Gluten-free grains (quinoa, rice), gluten-free pasta, corn tortillas, oatmeal, rice cakes, potatoes
Soy	Protein	Lentils, chickpeas, beans, peas, quinoa, chia seeds (blended into smoothies or baked goods), sunflower seed butter, tofu
Nuts	Protein, Healthy Fats	Sunflower seed butter, almond butter, pumpkin seed butter, hummus (for protein), avocado (for healthy fats), edamame
Fish	Omega-3 Fatty Acids	Flaxseeds (ground and mixed into foods), chia seeds (blended into smoothies or oatmeal), hemp seeds, walnuts, fortified foods (eggs, milk alternatives)

#### CONTACT WITH ALLERGENS CAN HAPPEN EVEN TO THE MOST CAREFUL, SO PLAN AHEAD:

- Wear a medical bracelet so others know about your allergy.
- For allergic reactions that aren't anaphylactic, have an antihistamine handy.
- If your doctor prescribes it for anaphylactic reactions, have two doses of epinephrine with you at all times.



### SAFE ALLERGEN-**FREE** EATING

Make sure everyone in the family knows the dos and don'ts

By Rachel Reiff Ellis

Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

hen one or more of your loved ones have food allergies, it's a family affair. Get everyone involved in food safety so your home (and table) can be welcoming for everyone.

#### TO BAN OR NOT TO BAN

Whether you let certain allergens into your house is a personal choice, says Scott H. Sicherer, MD, director of the Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe Food Allergy Institute at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. But there are important things to consider as you make that decision.

Reasons you might opt to ban an allergen include having a family member who is extremely sensitive to trace amounts or having a household with very young children who could get into certain foods, Sicherer says. How important or common a food is may also come into play.

"For example, excluding milk from a home is more disruptive than excluding cashews," he says.

#### **KEEP THINGS CLEAN AND LABELED**

When you're cooking, only use utensils and pans that have been washed well with soap and water. If you're cooking several foods at the same time, cook the allergen-free meal first. Then, cover it and keep it away from anything else you make.

Teach kids about "cross contamination"—no peanut butter knife in the jelly jar, for example. And create a system with clearly marked containers so there's no mistaking what's allergen-free and what's not.

#### SUPERMARKET SMARTS

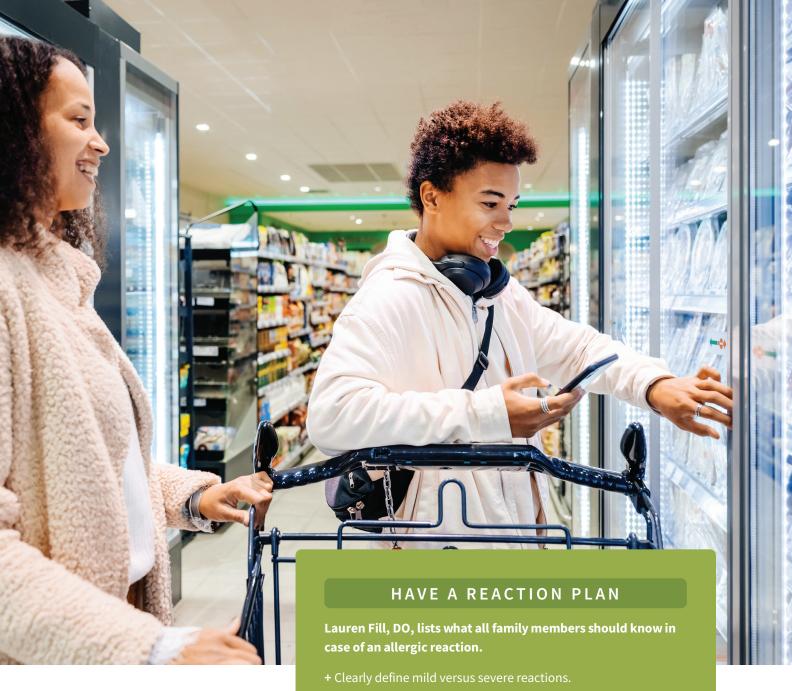
No matter who's doing the shopping for your household, the family guidelines should be clear and consistent. Once younger family members get more independence and can buy and bring home foods, go over the rules for what can come in and what needs to stay out. Then, become an investigator in the grocery aisle.



#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

Sound practices for food allergen homes.

- + Promote regular and thorough
- zones in your house.
- + Post label-reading instructions in your



"Always read labels-every timeincluding ingredients and 'contains' or 'may contain' statements, since formulations can change," says Lauren Fill, DO, an allergist/immunologist at Allergy/ Immunology Associates Inc. in Mayfield Heights, OH. "When in doubt about a product's safety, it is best to avoid it."

#### THINK OUTSIDE THE FOOD

The main way serious allergic reactions happen is by eating the food you're allergic to. But there are exceptions, Sicherer says.

- + Know when to use epinephrine.

"Passionate kissing with exchange of saliva could transfer allergen and result in an allergic reaction if the person without the allergy recently ate the food that the other person is avoiding," he says.

Also good to know: Some foods get aerosolized (turned into a fine spray in the air) when you cook them. Examples include frying fish, boiling milk, frying eggs, boiling shellfish, or handling the powdered form of milk or wheat flour.

"This can cause symptoms for those who are sensitive if they are in proximity, such as red eyes, sneezing, cough, asthma symptoms, or more depending upon the person's sensitivity and the amount of exposure," Sicherer says.

# COOKING AT HOME

Tips for eating healthfully without the worry

By Kendall K. Morgan Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, Medical Affairs

ooking can feel like a chore, but it comes with many advantages. Home-cooked food is often better quality than what you'd find in a restaurant. It generally has fewer calories and costs less. Eating at home is linked to better health, too.

"The majority of my practice as a dietitian is to try to get people to eat more home-cooked meals and to come up with easy options for them to enjoy because eating more restaurant food is linked with some adverse health outcomes," says Amanda Beaver, a registered dietitian nutritionist at Houston Methodist in Texas. "Compared to home-cooked food, restaurant food is higher in sodium, calories, and fat, and it also tends to be larger portions, too."

Not surprisingly, eating out more often is linked to weight gain and chronic diseases, including diabetes and metabolic syndrome. As a bonus, Beaver notes, the average cost of a meal cooked at home is under \$6, compared to \$12 for a fast-food meal.

#### **AVOIDING ALLERGENS**

When you have food allergies to consider, the benefits of cooking at home are even greater, says Sonali P. Majmudar, MD, an allergist at Majmudar Allergy in Hoffman Estates and Algonquin, IL, and a spokesperson for the American College of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology.

"Home cooking provides a high level of control over ingredients and food preparation practice, which helps reduce the risk of accidental allergen exposure," Majmudar says.



#### **LESS STRESS**

That extra control can improve your mental health.

"Many patients and families report reduced anxiety when they feel confident in preparing safe meals at home," Majmudar says. "Over time, this fosters a more positive relationship with food. It's especially helpful for children and teens who might feel isolated by their dietary restrictions."

#### **GET TEENS INVOLVED**

Beaver and Majmudar both recommend getting your teens with allergies engaged in the kitchen. Enlist them at every step, including deciding what's for dinner, grocery shopping, and cleaning up.



"I highly recommend parents to involve teens in meal planning and preparation," Majmudar says. "It teaches them independence and gives them ownership of their food choices. Starting with easy, simple recipes, teaching them to read labels, and looking for hidden ingredients are all habits they can carry into adulthood."

Majmudar advises teaching them how to avoid cross contamination, with dedicated cookware and utensils, and careful protocols for cleaning up.

"As a parent with a child that has an allergy, there's a lot of fear," Beaver says. "We're wanting to make sure that we don't expose them to anything. But what's going to help them even more is if we give them the skills to be able to take care of themselves when they're off on their own."

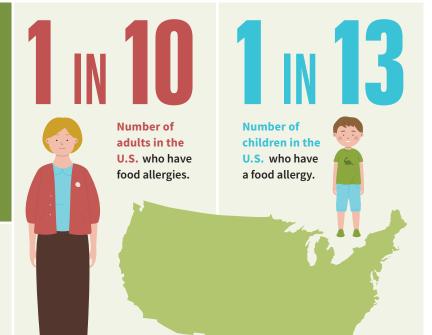
food safety, including how to read food labels. While any food can trigger an allergic reaction, the law requires that all food labels identify the top nine allergens in foods that cause reactions. These include:

- + Milk
- + Peanuts

# STATS & FACTS

Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD, WebMD Chief Physician Editor, **Medical Affairs** 

Amount of adolescents with food allergies who felt safer knowing they had medicine to treat a serious allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis, according to one survey.





SOY











**SHELLFISH** 

SESAME

**Number of foods that are** the leading causes of food allergies in the U.S.

**Amount of minutes it** takes for a skin allergy test to show a reaction such as a bump or hive to a food allergen.



Amount of adults in the U.S. with food allergies who have had a severe allergic reaction to food.



Number of hours it usually takes for most food allergy symptoms to show up after eating.



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SOURCES: Food Allergy Research & Education, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, Allergy, Asthma & Clinical Immunology This content was created using several editorial tools, including AI, as part of the process. Human editors reviewed this content before publication.