

Reading Labels



The ability to read labels accurately is the key to avoiding food allergens. However, often small amounts of an allergenic substance may be used to make spices, fillers or other food ingredients. If the manufacturer is unaware of these offending ingredients, allergic reactions may occur, especially in those who are extremely sensitive to a particular ingredient.

In addition, manufacturers may use the term “natural flavors” even when the product contains major allergens. The term “may contain” is often listed on the label when the manufacturer is uncertain regarding allergenic ingredients. Up to 5-10% of products that say “may contain” have the food item in it. You must avoid labels that say “may contain.”

Since food companies may frequently change ingredients, **you must allow enough time to read the labels EVERY time you shop** - even for familiar foods.

After reading a label you are still unsure whether the item contains allergenic ingredients, you should call the manufacturer to confirm that the product is allergen-free.

Helpful Hints

- Always read labels carefully
- Gluten Free is Wheat Free
- Pareve is Milk Free

Eating Out

Restaurants, fast food chains, and cafeterias do not routinely list their ingredients. When you dine out, choose simpler and less prepared items. You may also want to avoid any unknown or unfamiliar foods.

Many experts recommend typing up small cards to bring with you when you are dining out. The card should state “**I have severe food allergies. In order for me to avoid a life-threatening reaction, I must avoid all foods that contain or come in contact with:**” and then list all the items you must avoid. Hand this card to any individuals who are serving or preparing your food and ask the waiter or waitress to give this card to the chef or cook and mention your allergy.

Those who are extremely sensitive to certain allergens must be aware of cross-contamination during food preparation. Some examples of cross-contamination and hidden sources of allergic reactions are:

- The same deli slice machine may be used to cut meats and cheese
- Some restaurants melt butter on steaks after they have been grilled to add flavor
- Sometimes casein, a milk protein, is used in canned meat or hot dogs
- Eggs are sometimes used to create the foam topping on specialty coffee drinks
- Many ethnic foods often use peanuts in their preparation. In these restaurants, the non-peanut containing foods may be contaminated by peanuts

For more information:

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN)

www.foodallergy.org

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

www.aafa.org

American Academy of Pediatrics



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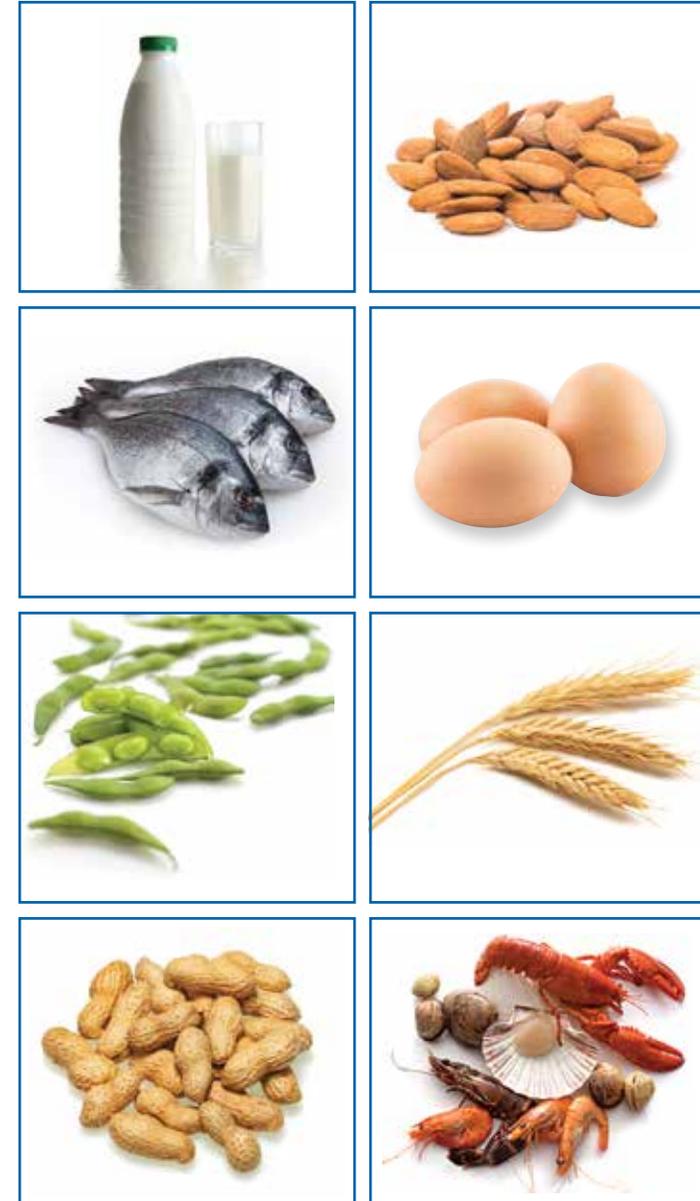
New York Chapter 2 Nutrition Committee

Phone: 516-326-0310

<http://www.ny2aap.org>

This brochure is for educational purposes only and is not meant to give specific medical advice. Remember to always discuss any questions or concerns regarding your child's allergies with your child's doctor or other healthcare provider.

DIETARY ADVICE FOR FOOD ALLERGIES



Introduction

It is estimated that about 2% of adults and 5% of children in the U.S. have food allergies.

Food allergy is an abnormal inflammatory response to a food triggered by your body's immune system. Allergic reactions to food can sometimes cause serious illness and even death.

Common reactions include rashes, wheezing, hives, vomiting, and lip or tongue tingling or swelling. It is critical for people who have food allergies to identify and avoid those foods that cause their allergic reactions. On the other hand, if you believe your child has a food allergy when he or she does not, you may be depriving your child of a food that may be beneficial to their health. Food allergy should be diagnosed by your child's physician.

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act requires the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to assure that all food labels clearly state if packaged food products contain any of the eight most common allergenic foods in its ingredients.

The most common foods accounting for 90% of all food-allergy reactions are:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Soy
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts
- Wheat
- Shellfish
- Fish

These eight foods must be identified by commonly known names; for example, using the word "milk" instead of "casein", or "eggs" instead of "albumin". The label will list these allergens specifically or the label may indicate that the product is manufactured in a plant which processes these allergens.

Frequently when food companies are unsure of potential ingredients, the labels will indicate that the product "may contain" certain allergenic ingredients.

Identifying Food Allergens:

Reading food labels can help you to identify an allergy-causing substance (allergen), however sometimes the term used on the label is still confusing. The following table lists some examples but you must remember to always read the labels.

Allergen:	Also Known As:	Often An Ingredient In:
 Milk	Casein, Caseinates, Curds, Lactalbumin, Rennet casein, and Whey.	Cheese, Ice Cream, Yogurt, Cream, Sour Cream, Butter, Artificial Butter Flavor, Chocolate, Pudding, Ghee, Half and Half, Lactose, Margarine, Hot Dogs, Sausages, and Luncheon Meats.
 Eggs	Albumin (or albumen), Globulin, Lysozyme, Ovalbumin, Ovomucin, and Ovomuroid.	Baked Goods, Bread, Meringue, Egg Noodle, Eggnog, Mayonnaise, Marshmallow, Egg Substitute.
 Wheat	Bran, Bulgur, Couscous, Matzo Meal, Durum, Farina, Gluten, Semolina, Spelt, Triticale, and Wheat Grass.	Baked Goods, Bread, Bread Crumbs, Pasta, Cakes, Cookies, Crackers, Hydrolyzed Protein, Malt Containing Beverages, Soy Sauce, and Starch.
 Soy	Edamame, Soybean, Soy Protein, and Soya.	Asian Cuisine, Flavoring, Miso, Shoyu Sauce, Soy Sauce, Tamari, Tempeh, Textured Vegetable Protein, Tofu (Bean Curd), Vegetable Broth, Vegetable Gum, and Vegetable Starch.
 Shellfish	Clams, Crabs, Crawfish, Lobster, Mussel, Octopus, Oyster, Prawn, Scallop, Shrimp, Snail, Squid, and other "shelled fish".	Fish Stock, Flavoring, and Seafood Flavoring.
 Tree Nuts	Almonds, Beech Nuts, Brazil Nuts, Butternut, Cashews, Chestnuts, Coconut, Hazelnuts, Ginko Nuts, Hickory Nuts, Macadamia Nuts, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Pistachios, and Walnuts.	Nut Butter, Nut Meal, Nut Oil, Marzipan, and Pesto.
 Peanuts	Arachis Oil, Peanut Butter, Peanut Flour, Peanut Oil, Beer Nuts, Ground Nuts, and Mixed Nuts.	Baked Goods, Candy, Chocolate, Chili, Flavoring, African, Asian and Mexican Cuisine.
 Fish	Salmon, Tuna, Halibut, Cod, Haddock, Herring, Scrod, Sole, Sprat, Swordfish, Mackerel, Trout and other "finned fish".	Fish Stock, Flavoring, and Seafood Flavoring.