



Food Allergies & Intolerances

And Cross-Contact Prevention

Objectives:

1. Understand the difference between food allergies and intolerances, their risks and symptoms.
2. Identify top 8 food allergies and allergy-free foods that can be offered to patients with those.
3. Describe proper food handling procedures for someone with a food allergy or intolerance.

Introduction:

Food allergies affect about 2 percent of adults in the United States. Each year in the U.S., it is estimated that anaphylaxis to food results in 30,000 emergency room visits, 2,000 hospitalizations, and 150 deaths. Food allergies are the leading cause of anaphylaxis, a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. Anaphylaxis can be caused by food allergies, insect stings, or medications.

What is a food allergy?

- A food allergy is a specific type of food reaction involving the immune system. The body produces what is called immunoglobulin E (IgE), an antibody to a food. Once a specific food is ingested and binds with the IgE antibody, an allergic reaction ensues.
- There is no cure for food allergies. Some can be outgrown, and studies have shown the severity can change throughout a person's life. *The best preventative is strict avoidance of the allergen(s).*
- Symptoms of food allergies appear from within minutes or up to 2 hrs after a person has eaten the food they are allergic to, and can range from mild to life-threatening.
- People who have previously experienced only mild symptoms may experience a life-threatening reaction called **anaphylaxis**, which can impair breathing/cause sudden drop in blood pressure.
- Allergic reactions can also include:
 - • Hives • Flushed skin or rash • Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth • Face, tongue, or lip swelling • Vomiting and/or diarrhea • Coughing or wheezing • Dizziness • Swelling of the throat • Difficulty breathing • Fainting • Loss of consciousness
- The prompt administration of epinephrine by an auto injector (EpiPen) during early symptoms of anaphylaxis may help prevent serious consequences.

What top 8 foods cause allergies?

- While more than 160 foods can cause allergic reactions in people with food allergies, the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (**FALCPA**) has identified the **eight** most common allergenic foods.
- These eight foods account for 90% of food allergic reactions. ***Following recipes, and good communication between cooks staff and service staff helps prevent any accidental allergens being served.
 - **Milk, eggs, fish (such as bass, flounder, cod), crustacean shellfish (crab, lobster, shrimp), tree nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans), peanuts, wheat, and soy.**
- These eight, and any ingredient that contains protein derived from them, are designated as "major food allergens" by the FALCPA, passed by Congress in 2004 and became effective in 2006.



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What allergy free foods can be offered to residents who have food allergies?

- Rice, quinoa, buckwheat and corn are all gluten free and good for those with gluten allergy/Celiac or gluten intolerance. Milks such as soy or almond milk can be used in place of dairy for lactose intolerance. Sunflower butter can be used in place of peanut butter for peanut allergies.
 - All food products containing two or more ingredients are required by Federal regulations to bear an ingredients statement with ingredients by common in descending order of predominance.

What is a food intolerance?

- A food intolerance is also known as a 'non-allergic food sensitivity'.
- They do not trigger the immune system. There is no immune response related.

How do we prevent cross contact?

- Cross contact is when a food comes in contact with another food, and their proteins mix. Even this trace of food protein has caused reactions in allergic people. Ex. peeling cheese off a cheeseburger to make it a hamburger or taking the shrimp off of a salad and serving it.

References and recommended readings (Today's Dietitian):

Food Intolerances vs Food Allergies

<http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/100111p52.shtml>

Outgrowing Food Allergies: Multiple Factors Affect Outcome

<http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/050113p12.shtml>



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Food Allergies & Intolerances (w/cross-contact prevention)

Pre-Test

1. True or False: A food intolerance can cause anaphylaxis.
 2. Which of the following is NOT one of the “TOP 8” food allergies?
a) Peanut b) MSG/monosodium glutamate c) Soy d) Dairy
 3. True or False: **A food intolerance** is also known as a ‘non-allergic food sensitivity’.
 4. True or False: People with asthma are less at risk of fatal anaphylaxis.
 5. Other than prep services/pots/pans, what can cause cross-contact to occur?
a) unclean thermometers b) unclean hands c) dirty aprons d) all of the above
 6. True or False: Quinoa and buckwheat are gluten free grains.
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Post-Test

1. True or False: A food intolerance can cause anaphylaxis.
2. Which of the following is NOT one of the “TOP 8” food allergies?
a) Peanut b) MSG/monosodium glutamate c) Soy d) Dairy
3. True or False: **A food intolerance** is also known as a ‘non-allergic food sensitivity’.
4. True or False: People with asthma are less at risk of fatal anaphylaxis.
5. Other than prep services/pots/pans, what can cause cross-contact to occur?
a) unclean thermometers b) unclean hands c) dirty aprons d) all of the above
6. True or False: Quinoa and buckwheat are gluten free grains.



Answer key

1. False. A food intolerance can cause severe pain and discomfort, but a food allergy causes an **immune** response resulting in anaphylaxis.
2. b) MSG/monosodium glutamate. Some people are sensitive to MSG (often in Asian foods) and may have headaches, mood changes or asthma, though it is not one of the top 8 food allergens.
3. True. An intolerance sometimes people refer to as a sensitivity.
4. False. They are more at risk. The main reason people die of anaphylaxis is their airways shut down. If underlying asthma, airways are likely to be more sensitive to an allergic reaction.
5. d) All of the above. Dirty hands, aprons, thermometers, and utensils could cause cross-contact of allergens! It's important to keep this in mind as we serve guests and families visiting the residents (grandchildren who may be joining grandma or grandpa for a meal).
6. True. Both can be used in dishes served to people with gluten allergy/Celiac disease or intolerance.