



Children and Food Allergies

Statistics

According to the CDC, there are 8 types of food that account for over 90% of allergic reactions in affected individuals. These are: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat.

There is some indication that the prevalence of food allergy may be increasing in the United States.

4 out of every 100 children have a food allergy.

Ways to reduce the risk of allergies in children

- To help reduce the risk of food allergies, many studies show that breast feeding is best.
- John Hopkins's Hospital recommends you breast feed for a year.
- Keep in mind, if you do breast-feed, ask your doctor about foods you should avoid while nursing since the allergens may pass into the milk. These usually include highly allergenic foods such as eggs, milk, and peanuts.
- You should also delay feeding solid foods until your baby is 4 to 6 months of age.
- Delay introduction of potentially allergenic foods such as milk and eggs until your baby is 1 year old. Peanuts and tree nuts should be avoided until the age of 3, longer if there is a history of peanut allergy in other family members.
- If there is a family history of sea food allergies, fish should also be avoided until the age of 2 or 3.
- Introduce solid foods one at a time to see if an allergic reaction occurs. Begin with rice cereal and bananas, which are least likely to trigger an allergic reaction.

Allergy vs. Food intolerance

Food Allergens are always a protein.

. Typical symptoms include tingling lips or itchy hives; these usually appear minutes after ingesting the tiniest amount of food containing the allergen. Beside obvious symptoms, only IgE antibodies can confirm an allergy, so be sure to talk to your doctor about symptoms of a food allergy.

Food allergies, especially to soy and cow's milk, may affect a sensitive infant in the first days or months, and usually appear as diarrhea. Exclusive breast feeding reduces the possibility of developing an allergy in high risk infants.

In food intolerances, symptoms are mostly confined to gastrointestinal tract. They may be an autoimmune disease, such as celiac disease, which is a very serious condition and should not be taken lightly.

Children often react to fruit acids in fruit products with a rash around the mouth – this is NOT an allergy.

Children usually outgrow allergies to soy, wheat, and eggs by the age of six.

Allergies to peanuts and tree nuts are often life-long.

Again, talk to your doctor if you suspect a food allergy in your child or your-self.

If you need help determining what foods contain your allergen (i.e. gluten) see a Registered Dietitian. Some foods may not be as obvious as one would think.

Reference websites

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db10.htm#ref1#ref1>

http://www.hopkinshospital.org/health_info/Allergy_Asthma/Reading/prevent_food-allergies.html