

# Get the Facts on Food Allergies

There are over 2.6 million Canadians, including almost 500,000 children, living with food allergies that need to be managed on a daily basis. As there is no cure for food allergies, avoidance is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction from occurring.

Food allergies are a growing public health issue and the more we know about them, the better prepared we are to support and help safeguard those who have them.

How much do you know about food allergies and what to do if someone has an allergic reaction?



Learn how to create a safe environment at [foodallergycanada.ca](http://foodallergycanada.ca)

## What are the priority food allergens in Canada?

Peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, mustard, fish, crustaceans and molluscs, wheat and triticale, sesame, soy, and sulphites (a food additive).

## What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis (pronounced anna-fill-axis) is a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death. Individuals with food allergies and at risk of anaphylaxis should always carry an epinephrine auto-injector (such as EpiPen®) which contains life-saving medication in case of an allergic reaction.

## What are the symptoms of anaphylaxis?

A person having an anaphylactic reaction might have any of the following symptoms:

- **Skin system:** hives, swelling (face, lips, tongue), itching, warmth, redness
- **Respiratory system (breathing):** coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain/tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny, itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing
- **Gastrointestinal system (stomach):** nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
- **Cardiovascular system (heart):** paler than normal skin colour/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizziness/light-headedness, shock
- **Other:** anxiety, sense of doom, headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste

## What should you do if someone has an allergic reaction?

If someone is experiencing an allergic reaction, give them epinephrine (such as an EpiPen®), and then call 9-1-1 or local emergency services. The person having a reaction needs to go to the hospital immediately, ideally by ambulance, even if their symptoms are mild or have stopped. This is important because reactions can get worse or come back. Lastly, make sure to notify an emergency contact such as a parent, guardian, or spouse.