

Food allergy & anaphylaxis



WHAT IS food allergy?

Your immune system normally protects you from germs and disease. It helps you to fight off bacteria, viruses, and other tiny organisms that can make you sick.

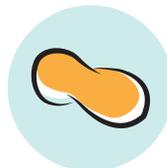
If you have a food allergy, your immune system mistakenly treats something in a particular food (most often, the protein) as if it's dangerous to you.

Your body reacts to the food (an allergen) by having an allergic reaction.

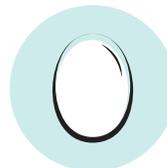
WHAT ARE

the most common food allergens in Canada?

People can be allergic to practically any food, but the most common food allergens that can cause anaphylaxis, referred to as "priority food allergens", are:



PEANUT



EGG



WHEAT and TRITICALE



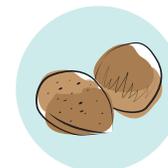
MUSTARD



SESAME



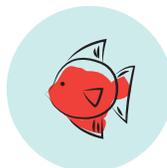
MILK



TREE NUTS*



SOY



FISH
(e.g. trout, salmon)



CRUSTACEANS
(e.g. lobster, shrimp, crab)
and **MOLLUSCS**
(e.g. scallops, clams, oysters, mussels)**

Health Canada also includes sulphites (a food additive) as a priority allergen.

* Tree nuts include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts.

** Crustaceans and molluscs are sometimes collectively referred to as shellfish.



WHAT IS anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis (pronounced anna-fill-axis) is the most serious type of allergic reaction. It is rapid in onset and may cause death.

While fatalities are rare, anaphylaxis must always be considered a medical emergency requiring immediate treatment.

Signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction can occur within minutes of exposure to an allergen (a substance capable of causing an allergic reaction). In rarer cases, the time frame can vary up to several hours after exposure.

WHAT ARE

the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis?

In the same person, each reaction can be different. Symptoms of anaphylaxis generally include two or more of these body systems: skin, respiratory, gastrointestinal and cardiovascular. However, a drop in blood pressure alone without other symptoms, can also represent anaphylaxis. It is also important to note that anaphylaxis can occur without hives.



SKIN

Hives, swelling (face, lips, tongue), itching, warmth, redness



RESPIRATORY (BREATHING)

Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms, (runny, itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing



GASTROINTESTINAL (STOMACH)

Nausea, pain or cramps, vomiting, diarrhea



CARDIOVASCULAR (HEART)

Paler than normal skin colour/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizziness or lightheadedness, shock



OTHER

Anxiety, sense of doom (the feeling that something bad is about to happen), headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste

Visit foodallergycanada.ca or call **1 866 785-5660**
for more information and support.
