

Peanut and Tree Nut Allergy

Dietary Advice for Adults, Young People,
Parents and Carers



Patient Name:

Dietitian:

Date:

Contact Number:

Email:



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Signs and symptoms of nut allergy

Symptoms can occur within minutes or a few hours after eating nut containing foods. They range from mild to severe and may include:

- Sudden onset itchy eyes, ears, runny nose and sneezing
- dry repetitive coughing
- itching or tingling of the lips, tongue or throat, often described by children as feeling 'itchy, 'spikey' or 'it hurts'
- red, raised itchy rash (hives) on face or body
- tummy ache, nausea or vomiting
- sudden change in behaviour e.g. child becomes clingy or quiet
- aversion to food containing nuts
- swelling of face, eyes, lips, tongue or throat
- difficulty swallowing or talking
- difficult or noisy breathing
- drop in blood pressure that can lead to dizziness, collapse or loss of consciousness.

How to deal with an allergic reaction should be discussed in detail by your Doctor or allergy nurse. You should also be given a written emergency plan.

It is difficult to predict who will have a severe (anaphylactic) reaction but the risk tends to be higher in people who have asthma. However, anyone who has a nut allergy has the potential to have a severe allergic reaction even if previous reactions have been mild. Even trace amounts of a nut or peanut can cause severe reactions in some nut allergic children or adults.

It is therefore critical that a thorough allergy risk assessment is made by an allergy specialist and a personalised emergency plan put in place. In some cases, an adrenaline auto-injector will be prescribed (such as EpiPen, Jext or Emerade). It is essential that proper training in their use is given and that they are carried at all times.



Diagnosis

It is important that nut allergies are diagnosed by a healthcare professional with the right training. They will ask questions about the history of any allergic reactions and may perform tests. The type of tests will depend on the type of reactions and the symptoms experienced.

Most allergic reactions to nuts occur within minutes (or sometimes hours) of eating nuts. Skin prick tests or blood tests that measure 'specific IgE antibodies' may be used to help with the diagnosis. These test results can be difficult to interpret without an allergy specialist. Sometimes, a food challenge (where increasing amounts of the suspected food are given and symptoms monitored) may be needed to make a diagnosis. This will only be carried out in a safe hospital setting.

Some companies offer food allergy or intolerance tests that measure IgG antibodies. These are not a safe or reliable way of diagnosing nut allergies. Other tests such as hair analysis, kinesiology testing and vega testing have also been found to be unreliable and have no scientific basis, and therefore should not be used.



Will my child grow out of their nut allergy?

Most children will have their nut allergy for life. However, about 20% (1 in 5) of peanut allergic children will grow out of their allergy compared with only about 10% (1 in 10) with a tree nut allergy. Therefore, it is important for your child to attend follow-up appointments to check their allergy status. Never try to reintroduce nuts into your child's diet without medical guidance or supervision.



Should all nuts and peanuts be avoided?

Children who have an allergy to one type of nut or peanuts are more likely to be allergic, or become allergic to other nuts. 30% (1 in 3) of nut allergic people will react to more than one type of nut.

Your child may be allergic to just peanuts, one or more tree nuts or a mixture of peanut and tree nuts. Children often can't tell different nuts apart and there is also a risk of nuts being contaminated by other nuts during food preparation and manufacturing. Therefore, in order to minimise the risk of an allergic reaction, we recommend that ALL tree nuts and peanuts are avoided unless you have been tested and advised by your Doctor or Dietitian which nut(s) may be eaten safely (see section below).



Which nuts should we avoid?

All food containing the following:

Tree Nuts*

- Almond
- Brazil
- Cashew
- Hazelnut (cobnuts / filberts)
- Macadamia (Queensland / bush nut)
- Pecan (hickorynut)
- Pistachio
- Walnut

Peanuts*

- Arachishypogaea
- Beer nuts
- Cacahuete
- Chinese nuts
- Earthnuts
- Groundnuts
- Goobernut/pea
- Mandelonas
- Monkey nuts

*Dietitian to delete any tolerated nuts as appropriate (see NOTE below)

NOTE: If you have been advised by your Doctor that it is safe to eat particular nuts, we recommend that:

(a) they are only eaten if you are confident that they are not contaminated with other nuts known to cause a problem; and

(b) they are only eaten at home with emergency medication to hand and an adult present. This is because it is harder to be sure that any food containing nuts purchased and eaten outside the home is completely free from contamination by other nuts known to cause a problem.

(c) they are eaten regularly (i.e. 2 - 3 times a week) to prevent a future nut allergy developing.



What about...?

Chestnut, water chestnut, coconut, palm nuts, nutmeg and butternut squash: Despite all containing the word “nut”, none are related to peanuts or tree nuts. Therefore, they should not be avoided unless they are known to cause a problem.

Shea nut: Shea nut butter and oil are mostly found in moisturising creams, toiletries and cosmetics but are increasingly found as an ingredient in chocolate-based confectionery. They contain minimal protein and the risk of allergic reactions to products containing shea nut is very low. However, shea nut is a tree nut so people with a nut allergy may choose to avoid these products – particularly in skin creams if they have eczema.

Sesame seeds and pine nuts: These seeds share some similar allergens to peanut and tree nuts, so a small number of people with nut allergy may also react to:

(a) Sesame oil and seeds - found in tahini, hummus, falafel, Chinese and Japanese foods, burger buns, rice cakes, bread sticks, crackers, crisps, speciality breads, cakes, biscuits and halva.

(b) Pine nuts - found in ready-made salads, pizza, pasta dishes, some speciality breads, pies, cakes, biscuits or muesli, and pesto, (which often contains other nuts such as cashew so always check labels).

If your child has never eaten sesame or pine nut, they should avoid these foods until they have been allergy tested. If the test is positive, they should then have a food challenge to confirm they are truly allergic. Those who are already eating and tolerating foods that contain sesame and pine nut should continue to eat these foods.

Legumes (pulses): Peanuts belong to the legume family, which includes: peas, beans, bean sprouts, lentils, and soya beans (including soya products). A small number of children and adults with peanut allergy (particularly those of South Asian descent) may react to another legume. Care should be taken when new legumes are introduced into the diet, but they should only be avoided if they are known to cause a problem.

Lupin: These seeds share similar allergens to peanuts. So, a small number of peanut allergic people may react to lupin. Lupin seed flour may be used instead of wheat or soya flour in French breads, biscuits, cakes, pastry, pancakes, pizza, pasta, wheat and gluten free foods and some vegetarian products. Lupin is only used as an ingredient in a few UK foods. It is more widely used in mainland Europe, Brazil and the Middle East. People with lupin allergy should be careful when visiting or eating foods brought back from these countries. Children with peanut allergy should avoid foods containing lupin unless they have been tested and know they are not allergic to it.



What about...? *continued*

Nut Oils

Refined peanut oil has had the protein removed, which is the part of the nut that causes allergic reactions. Therefore, it is highly unlikely to cause a reaction in the majority of peanut allergic people. Some medicines e.g. Abidec baby vitamins contain refined peanut oil. Whilst the risk of an allergic reaction is very low, the Committee on Safety of Medicines has recommended that patients known to be allergic to peanuts should not use medicines containing peanut oil.

Unrefined, crude or cold pressed peanut oil (also called groundnut oil) may contain small amounts of nut protein and is more likely to cause reactions so should always be avoided. Unrefined peanut oil is most commonly found in Indian or Oriental food products in dishes such as curries or stir-fries.

Note: In the UK, both refined and unrefined peanut oil must be labelled as containing peanut. However, it is not a legal requirement for manufacturers to say whether their peanut oil is refined or unrefined. Therefore, the safest approach is to avoid all foods that contain peanut or groundnut oil.

Cold pressed tree nut and seed oils (e.g. walnut, almond, and sesame oil) contain significant levels of protein and should be avoided unless allergy tests have confirmed that there is no allergy to these particular nuts or seeds.

Vegetable oil and products containing vegetable oil that are sold in the UK must state if they contain any peanut or nut oil. Therefore, all products containing vegetable oil are safe to eat unless peanut or tree nuts are listed in the ingredients.



Checking food labels

European Union (EU) food allergen labelling law requires that common food allergens used as ingredients or processing aids must be **declared on the packaging or at the point of sale**. The list of 14 common food allergens includes tree nuts, peanuts, lupin and sesame. Any products that contain peanut should use the term 'peanut' on the ingredient label and those containing tree nuts should list each type of nut (e.g. cashew, walnut, almond etc).

These laws apply to all **packaged and manufactured foods and drinks sold throughout the EU**. They also apply to **foods sold loose** (e.g. from a bakery, delicatessen, butcher or café) and **foods packed or pre-packed for direct sale** (e.g. café, sandwich bar, food outlet, market stall, some catering products). If you travel outside the EU, be aware that labelling laws are different so check ingredients carefully.

For **pre-packed products (e.g. made in a factory)** allergens must be listed in one place on the product label (i.e. in the ingredients list) and highlighted (**e.g. in bold or underlined**).



Checking food labels *continued*

Example of food label containing walnuts:

Carrot Cake:

Ingredients: Brown Sugar, Fortified British Wheat Flour (**Wheat** Flour, Calcium Carbonate, Iron, Niacin, Thiamin), Carrots (16%), Icing Sugar, Rapeseed Oil, Cream Cheese (Cows' **Milk**) (7%), Butter (Cows' **Milk**), Dried Free Range **Egg**, Water, **Walnuts**, Sultanas, Cinnamon, Raising Agent: Potassium bicarbonate; Preservative: Potassium Sorbate.

Allergy Advice: For allergens, see ingredients in **bold**.

More information on food allergy labelling is available from NHS Choices:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/living-with/

There are different rules for:

- foods which are **pre-packed on the same site where they are sold (pre-packed for direct sale)** such as in a café, sandwich shop, deli or food outlet preparing food in their own kitchen. For these foods, allergen information has to be provided either in writing or verbally. However, the law is changing and from Autumn 2021 labelling with the full list of ingredients will be required.

- foods sold **without packaging** such as in a bakery, café or pub. For these foods, allergen information has to be provided either in writing or verbally. If provided verbally, the business must be able to provide further written information if requested (in the UK only).

FOOD ALLERGY NOTICE

IF YOU HAVE A FOOD ALLERGY
PLEASE ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

THANK YOU

Take care when buying foods with no visible labelling. Volunteer sellers e.g. at a school fayre, charity cake sale or markets may not label ingredients or may give advice on the look of a product rather than actual ingredients (e.g. saying a cake contains no nuts when the maker included Nutella as an ingredient).

Always check the label: manufacturers change their ingredients from time to time e.g. 'new improved recipe'. It is always safer to check the ingredients every time you buy.



Checking food labels *continued*

May contain... or 'Made in a factory...' labelling statements

These warnings are used by food manufacturers to highlight a possible risk of an otherwise nut free product being accidentally contaminated by nuts during manufacturing. There is currently no law to say how or when this type of labelling should be used but it appears on a wide variety of products. The way these statements are worded does not indicate their level of importance, e.g, 'not suitable for....' does not mean there is a greater risk of contamination than 'made in a factory....'. Tolerance to foods with a 'may contain' labelling does not always mean that trace amounts of allergen are tolerated.

It is important to take these warnings seriously and consider the following points:

- Just because a particular food with a nut warning has been eaten safely in the past, does not mean that it will always be safe; it may contain nut traces next time. Recipes and manufacturing processes can change.
- All nut warnings should be treated with the same level of risk regardless of the wording used.
- Patients may be more sensitive to nut protein if they are unwell, have been doing strenuous exercise or drinking alcohol, so having a nut trace during these times is more risky.
- Sweet and savoury snacks (e.g. cakes, biscuits, cereal bars, and crackers), confectionary and breakfast cereals are the foods most likely to be contaminated with nuts or seeds and should be avoided if they have a 'May contain' warning.
- Chocolate and chocolate covered items pose a higher risk of nut contamination because chocolate dripping off one product may be used on another during manufacturing. Therefore, chocolate with nut warnings should always be avoided (lists of peanut free or all nut free products are available from chocolate manufacturers).

The safest approach is to avoid all foods with "may contain" nut warnings. However, if a food with a nut warning is to be eaten the following advice should always be followed:

- Always have in-date emergency medication to hand
- be within easy reach of a phone or mobile that has charge and reception
- only eat if someone is with you who can help if a reaction occurs
- avoid if in a remote location, far from emergency services
- avoid if unwell or asthma is not well controlled
- avoid after strenuous exercise or drinking alcohol
- avoid if you have had a previous anaphylactic reaction to nut traces or "may contain" products.

Discuss your approach to managing "may contain nut" products with your Dietitian or allergy team as they can give you specific advice.



Checking food labels *continued*

Allergy Alerts

Sometimes food products have to be withdrawn or recalled if they pose a risk to customers. This may be because the allergy labelling is missing, wrong or if there is any other food allergy risk. You can get allergy alerts from the Food Standards Agency website or when you subscribe to a free email or SM text message alert system.

To subscribe, go to: www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/subscribe

Alternatively, you can view product alerts online from:

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/information-training/allergy-alerts/

Cross contamination

Cross contamination is a risk for people with a nut allergy. It occurs when a nut free food accidentally comes into contact with nut protein during storage, manufacturing or food preparation. Even tiny traces of nut can cause an allergic reaction if eaten. Skin contact with a contaminated item may cause a local skin irritation but will not cause a severe (anaphylactic) reaction.

Examples of Cross Contamination

Using the same spoon to serve nut containing and nut free dishes (e.g. ice cream), or using the same cooking pan or oil previously used to cook a nut based meal (e.g. Chinese or Indian restaurant or takeaway food).

- Taking the nuts off an ice cream or marzipan off a fruit cake will still leave traces of nut protein on the remaining food.
- Eating only the raisins from a packet of nuts and raisins.
- Food touching at a buffet, deli-counter, self-service salad bar or on a barbeque (e.g. satay chicken next to a plain burger).

Tips to Reduce Cross Contamination

- Take extra care with hand washing and cleaning of food preparation areas and equipment. Wipe down surfaces with hot soapy water.
- Always use clean dishes and cutlery. Never use the same knife for peanut butter, margarine and jam. Use separate labelled containers for the allergic person if other people in the household are eating peanut butter or nuts.
- Consider having one agreed place in the kitchen where nuts are prepared and consumed or make your home a nut free zone.
- Don't drink from cups used by other people that may have been eating nuts.
- Avoid kissing or holding hands with someone who has eaten nuts until they have thoroughly cleaned their hands, face and mouth.



Common nut containing foods to avoid

Please note: this is not an exhaustive list – always check labels.

- **Breakfast cereals:** crunchy nut cornflakes, muesli or granola with nuts, honey nut cereals, nut Cheerios™, Krave™.
- **Cereal bars:** Tracker™ bar, Jordans™ bar, Eat Natural™, Nakd™ and Trek™ bars.
- **Bread & crackers:** Speciality breads topped with or containing nuts (e.g. walnut bread, Peshwari & Kashmiri naan bread).
- **Biscuits, pastries and cakes:** Products with almond essence, marzipan and whole/ chopped/ ground nuts (e.g. macaroons, amaretto biscuits, Florentines, choc nut chip cookies, peanut cookies, boosters, almond croissants, baklava, frangipane or Bakewell tart, pecan pie, apple pie/strudel, chocolate brownies, Dundee or Christmas cake, Stollen cake, carrot and passion cake, coffee and walnut cake, Battenburg cake).
- **Chocolates and Sweets:** Snickers™, Toblerone™, Topic™, Picnic™, Fuse™, Dime™ bar, Reese's™ peanut butter cups, Revels™, peanut M&Ms™, fruit and nut bar, bar of Plenty™, Celebrations™, Quality Street™, Roses™, Walnut Whips™, Ferrero Rocher™, Kinder Bueno™, speciality chocolates or mixed selections with praline, noisettes (hazelnuts), nougat, nut fudge/toffee, nut brittle, halva, sugared almonds, marzipan, chocolate Brazils.
- **Desserts, ice cream and cheese:** Pistachio/almond/praline ice cream or kulfi, hazelnut yoghurt, snickers ice cream, ice cream sundae topped with nuts, cornetto, ice cream scooped from ice cream counter where risk of cross contamination is high, Crediou or Rambol cheese coated in nuts.
- **Take-away/ready meals:** Indian, Chinese, Thai, Indonesian, Middle Eastern, and African dishes - many are contaminated with or contain nuts or unrefined nut oils or sauces thickened with peanut flour (e.g. bhajis, samosas, tikka and korma curries, spring rolls, stir fries with cashew or peanut, chicken satay, pad Thai, couscous or tagine with roasted almonds or pistachios).
- **Vegetarian foods:** nut cutlets, veggie burgers, nut roast.
- **Salads:** nut-based salads (e.g. waldorf salad), peanut sprouts and peanut shoots - now being sold in some supermarkets.
- **Soup, sauces & spreads:** peanut soup, satay sauce, Chinese and curry sauces (e.g. hoi sin, korma), pesto (often contains cashew or other nuts as well as pine nuts), peanut butter and other nut butters, chocolate & hazelnut spread (e.g. Nutella™), praline spread.
- **Savoury snacks:** All nuts and peanuts, mixed nuts and raisins, Bombay mix, trail mix, Bamba snacks, Chinese rice crackers, pickled walnuts and pop corn cooked in ground nut oil. **If avoiding sesame**, check if snacks are cooked in sesame oil.
- **Drinks:** Nut milks eg. Almond and hazel nut milk, nut flavoured milk shakes, peanut punch.
- **Oils:** Peanut oil, groundnut oil, Arachis oil, and other tree nut oils e.g. almond, walnut, and sesame oil (if not tolerated).



Suitable foods and foods to avoid

The following tables provide a list of foods that are usually nut free and those that sometimes contain nuts and should always be checked. This list may not be complete as products change, so you must always check the ingredients list on the package. Remember to discuss with your Dietitian about how to approach 'may contain' labelling.

Nut Free Foods	Foods that may contain nut
Milk and Dairy Products	
Cow/goat/sheep milk. Soya/rice/coconut/oat milk. Plain yoghurts, fromage frais. Fresh cream. Plain cheese, plain cream cheese & cottage cheese.	Ice cream, ice cream wafers. Flavoured milk. Cheesecake. Cheese spreads. Speciality and loose unpackaged cheese.
Meats and fish	
Fresh or frozen unprocessed meat or fish. Plain tinned fish e.g. tuna, salmon, sardines etc.	Indian, Chinese, Thai, Indonesian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, African dishes. Processed meat and fish dishes (e.g. pate, sausages, burgers, breaded chicken, fish fingers, meat pies & pastries, coronation chicken, and meat or fish in sauces or marinades).
Breakfast Cereals	
Plain breakfast cereals without nut warnings e.g. Weetabix™, cornflakes, porridge oats, Shredded Wheat etc.	Breakfast cereals (e.g. fruit & fibre, muesli, granola, oat crunch and flavoured cereals).
Breads, pastries, cakes and biscuits	
Plain breads & rolls (white, brown or wholemeal). Plain bread products. e.g. pitta bread or baguettes. Cream crackers. Plain cakes and biscuits with no nut warnings. Home-made or purchased bread, cakes and biscuits known to be nut free. *Check for lupin if relevant	Loose products (e.g. from bakery or deli) for cross contamination. Naan bread, speciality breads. Bread sticks, rice cakes, crackers. Cereal/muesli bars, flapjacks. Fruit cakes, and other Middle Eastern cakes and pastries. Sponge cakes, pastries, pies, gateaux, cookies and biscuits.



Suitable foods and foods to avoid *continued*

Nut Free Foods	Foods that may contain nut
Fruit, vegetable and pasta	
Fresh, plain frozen, stewed, tinned or dried fruit and vegetables.	Mixed salads, rice/pasta/noodle salads, coleslaw and fruit dishes. Vegetarian dishes (e.g. Veggie burgers, cutlets & sausages, pate). Pasta dishes with pesto sauce (may contain cashew) and nut fillings in tortellini and ravioli
Desserts, sweets and chocolate	
Jelly. Milk puddings, custard, egg custard, rice pudding. Sweets known to be nut free e.g. boiled sweets. Chocolate guaranteed to be nut free. Home-made or purchased desserts known to be nut free.	Chocolate, fudge or toffee bars. Mixed chocolate selections. Asian, Greek, Turkish, Middle Eastern sweets. Instant desserts, trifle toppings, mousse, ice-cream and ice lollies, meringues, pavlova. Sponge puddings, crumbles and fruit pies.
Snacks, soups, sauces, condiments and spreads	
Plain crisps. Home-made and ready-made soups known to be nut free. Salt, pepper. Fresh herbs and spices. Vinegar. Soy sauce. Marmite™, Bovril™.	Flavoured crisps and snacks. Dried fruit. Salad dressings & mayonnaise. Dips, hummus. Stuffing mixes. Oriental and Indian sauces (e.g. for curries and stir-fries). Popcorn cooked in groundnut oil.
Drinks	
	Instant chocolate drinks and milkshakes
Fats and Oils	
Olive/rapeseed/corn/soya/sunflower/palm and vegetable oils. Butter, ghee, lard, and margarines made from the from the above oils.	Fried foods and Indian or oriental dishes cooked in groundnut, peanut or other nut oils. Salad dressings using unrefined nut oils (e.g. walnut, almond, groundnut oil).



Non-food sources of nuts

Bird food, pet food and other animal feed may contain nuts. So, remember to check the ingredients if you or your child is handling these products.

Some cosmetics, creams, toiletries, pharmaceutical products (e.g. ear drops, lip balm, throat spray) and vitamin supplements may contain nut or seed oils, but these oils are likely to be refined and therefore very unlikely to cause allergic reactions. Some sensitive individuals may need to avoid skin products containing nut oils, if they develop any localised skin reactions such as an itchy rash. Any nut-containing products taken orally should be avoided by those with a nut allergy.

Cosmetics, pharmaceutical products and supplements are required by EU law to have any nut ingredients listed using the Latin name. For example:

- **Bitter Almond** - *Prunus amara*
- **Sweet Almond** - *Prunus dulcis*
- **Brazil** - *Bertholletia excelsa*
- **Cashew** - *Ancardium occidentale*
- **Hazelnut** - *Corylus rostrata, americana or avellana*
- **Macadamia** - *Macadamia ternifolia*
- **Peanut** - *Arachis hypogaea*
- **Pistachio** - *Pistacia vera*
- **Pecan** - *Carya illinoensis*
- **Sesame** - *Sesamum indicum*
- **Shea nut** - *Vitellaria paradoxa*
- **Walnut** - *Juglans regia or nigra*

Recent research suggests that creams and other products containing *Arachis* (peanut) oil applied to broken or inflamed skin (e.g. eczema) may increase a child's risk of developing peanut allergy. Therefore, we recommend that infants and children with eczema or a family history of allergies avoid any skin products containing nut oils.



Pregnancy and breast feeding

There is no clear evidence that eating or not eating nuts during pregnancy or breastfeeding has any effect on the chances of a child developing a nut allergy. If mothers would like to eat nuts or foods containing nuts when pregnant or breastfeeding, they can choose to do so as part of a healthy balanced diet, unless they are allergic to them or unless advised by a health professional to avoid nuts.



Advice for young children

- Teach your child about nuts i.e. their different names, what they look like and which foods typically contain nuts. This will help them to be careful about what they eat and to refuse foods unless they are sure they are safe.
- Remember to reassure your child about all the nut free foods they can safely eat. Children should be encouraged to join in social activities and school trips whenever possible.
- Avoid keeping foods in the house that contain those nuts your child is allergic to. Any foods containing nuts should be kept in a specially locked cupboard or sealed container out of reach.
- Do not eat foods containing nuts when your child is in the same room. Clean up well and wash your hands after eating.
- Make sure friends, relatives, carers and teachers know that your child is allergic to nuts, who to contact and what to do if they have a reaction. Make sure they have an emergency action plan and in-date emergency medication.
- The Anaphylaxis Campaign provide online training about anaphylaxis and severe allergies to families, carers, individuals, schools, and other organisations www.anaphylaxis.org.uk
- If your child is eating away from home and you are unsure what they will be given to eat, provide your own snacks or packed lunch so they can still socialise in a safe way.
- Do not let children feed small animals (e.g. squirrels, hamsters) or birds, if the animal and bird feed contains nuts.
- When going to parties or events such as weddings always tell the host about your child's allergy and ask for a nut free party. Offer to bring nut free alternatives (e.g. chocolate and cakes).
- Nut allergy wristbands, badges, stickers and T-shirts can help alert other adults to your child's allergy and are available from websites such as: www.cafepress.co.uk, www.kidsaware.co.uk, and www.zazzle.co.uk
- Take extra care when visiting friends and family at certain times of year such as Halloween, Harvest Festival and Christmas when nuts and peanuts are more popular.
- At Halloween ask your child not to eat sweets and treats without checking with you that they are safe. Have safe alternatives ready that you can swap for sweets and treats that are not suitable. Sometimes 'treat size' versions of sweets have different ingredients so double check these.
- Younger siblings of children allergic to peanuts or tree nuts may be at increased risk of developing a nut allergy particularly if they have eczema. Ask your Doctor about allergy testing for younger siblings.



Advice for teenagers and students

- Teenagers and young adults are more at risk of life-threatening reactions than younger children. This is because they tend to spend more time away from home eating out with friends and often take more risks. They may also be self-conscious about their allergy and find it difficult to ask whether a food is nut free in front of new friends. As students, they may be living on their own or shopping and cooking for themselves for the first time.
- It is important that they always carry their prescribed medication and feel confident about how and when to use it.
- Regular dietary advice and adrenaline auto-injector training (e.g. Epi-pen, Jext or Emerade) is recommended. Ask your Doctor or Dietitian about this.
- Young people should always tell their friends, work colleagues and employers that they have a nut allergy, where they keep their medication and what to do if they have an allergic reaction.
- Asian restaurants (e.g. Indian, Chinese, Thai) should be avoided, as most severe reactions happen with this type of food. Never eat out or have take-aways unless you have your emergency medication with you.
- Alcohol can affect judgment and a combination of alcohol and heavy exercise can increase the severity of a reaction.
- Tiredness can also increase the severity of a reaction.
- Be careful when kissing or drinking from the cup or glass of someone who has eaten nuts, as nut protein can be present in saliva for several hours and could cause a reaction.
- Keep asthma well controlled – see GP for help if required.
- You may find this blog helpful: May-contain.com



Tips for eating out

- Check out the restaurant's website – many now contain nutritional and allergy information.
- Ring the restaurant in advance to ask if they can cater for your/your child's) allergy. Try to call at off-peak times when the staff will have more time to deal with your query.
- Speak to the waiter/waitress or the chef as soon as you are seated to ensure that they are all aware of your/your child's food allergy.
- Ensure the message about your nut allergy gets to the chef. Always check it is written on the order and not just verbally given to the waiter/waitress.
- You may find it helpful to use a 'chef card' available from www.dietarycard.co.uk or print off from www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/allergy-chef-cards.pdf and ask the chef to confirm that the food you have requested is completely nut free.
- Get to know the chef in your favourite local restaurant.
- Avoiding the busiest meal times may help to give staff more time to check ingredients properly. If in doubt, go elsewhere.
- Keep to "simple" foods on the menu. Sauces and gravies contain many ingredients that can't always be remembered by staff. Nuts may not be mentioned in the description of a dish so, check for hidden sources (e.g. in bread, pastry, salads and desserts). If you do not understand the description of a menu item, it is safer not to order it.
- Thai, Indonesian, Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern and African meals have a high risk of nut contamination and should be avoided unless you are sure they are nut free.
- Self-service areas, buffets and salad bars are also at risk of cross contamination from one dish to another.
- Make sure those you are dining with know about your allergy and know what to do if you have a reaction.
- Always carry in-date emergency medication with you.
- If eating with friends or at a party, remember to tell the host about your nut allergy in advance so they can prepare nut free dishes.
- At children's parties it may be helpful to take your own nut free foods. If you are not staying with your child, remember to explain how serious his or her reaction could be and how to deal with it.



Travel tips

- If you are travelling abroad, check in advance how to describe your/your child's allergies in the local language. There are several websites that provide useful phrases and eating out translation cards in different languages: www.allergyaction.org, www.allergyfreepassport.com, www.dietarycard.co.uk and www.allergyuk.org
- If you are flying, speak to your airline well in advance to check if they can accommodate your dietary needs. On boarding, notify flight attendants of your nut allergy and ask for an ingredient list to check the correct airline meal is given.
- Try to choose an airline that doesn't serve complementary peanut and nut snacks. Some will agree to give alternative nut free snacks on your flight if requested well in advance.
- Consider taking snacks for the journey in case your flight is delayed or the requested meal is not available. Try to obtain a letter from your Doctor or Dietitian explaining why you need to take special food items on board. Any items not needed for the flight should be packed in your suitcase. Do not pack fruit, vegetables or meat as you will not be allowed to take these through customs at your destination.
- Also check if the airline has any restrictions on the amount of liquid you can take on board. Some will want a Doctor's letter confirming an allergy before allowing you to take more than 100 ml of liquid (e.g. antihistamine, hypoallergenic formula or other milk substitute) or an adrenaline auto-injector.
- Keep all emergency medication (e.g. antihistamines, adrenaline auto-injector) and action plan close to hand and check they are in date. If flying, do not store auto-injectors in overhead lockers.
- Make sure any people you are travelling with know about your/your child's allergies and what to do if a reaction occurs.
- If you are staying in a hotel, try to get a room with a kitchen in case there are no safe places to eat out.
- Wherever you are staying, make sure you have the telephone number of the local hospital or emergency services and keep your medical insurance number handy in case you need it.
- Ensure you/your child wears an allergy ID bracelet or card. These and travel containers to protect emergency medicines are available from a variety of websites: www.medicalert.org.uk, www.sostalisman.com, www.yellowcross.co.uk, www.friouk.com and www.anaphylaxis.org.uk



Useful contacts

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk A charity organisation providing information & support for people with severe allergies including information on the availability and use of adrenaline auto-injectors. **Tel: 01252 542 029.**

www.allergyuk.org A charity organisation providing support for people with allergies. **Tel: 01322 619 898.**

www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy NHS choices allergy and intolerance advice.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis NHS choices anaphylaxis advice.

www.bda.uk.com The British Dietetic Association provides fact sheets on food allergy & intolerance, autistic spectrum & allergy testing. **Tel: 0121 200 8080.**

www.bsaci.org British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology - Allergy information for patients.

www.kidswithfoodallergies.org Kids with Food Allergies Foundation – American food allergy support and recipes for parents.

www.allergicchild.com Allergic Child – an American web site for parents of children with food allergies.

www.sparepensinschools.uk A one-stop resource for anyone who wants to know about anaphylaxis and adrenaline auto-injector “pens” in schools.

www.allergyacademy.org/topic Useful allergy resources.



Useful websites

www.freefromfoodawards.co.uk/freefrom_foods/directories/nut-free.html

Directory of nut free foods and other free from foods, recipes and other products.

www.nutmums.com/nut-free-food : A-Z of nut free foods and other information and support for parents of nut allergic children..

Nut Free Products

The following companies have dedicated nut free production lines and factories. No product can be guaranteed to be 100% nut free but these companies aim to control all possible sources of nut contamination and therefore may have safer products. These products are available on-line and in health food shops or supermarkets:

www.kinnerton.com Nut free chocolates

www.justlovefoodcompany.com Birthday cakes made to order and available in supermarkets

www.freedommallows.com Vegetarian marshmallows

www.orgran.com Cookies, crisp breads and cereals

www.wowbutter.com Toasted soya spread

www.eskalfoods.com Freenut butter - sunflower spread

www.plamilfoods.co.uk online store for vegan, milk, egg, nut, and sugar free products

Online product finder service

www.foodmaestro.me and www.spoon.guru

these apps help you to find 'free from' products. With these apps you can:

- filter products by ingredients you want to avoid
- find products with ingredients you want to include
- discover allergen information on each ingredient
- create personal shopping lists
- access suitable recipes
-

Product information correct at time of publication but may change

Nut Free Food Lists

Many supermarkets and food companies will provide information on their own-brand nut free products. Your Dietitian can provide a separate list of contact numbers and websites if required.



Top tips for living with a nut allergy

- Avoid all tree nuts and peanuts unless you have had allergy tests and been advised by your Doctor that other nuts are safe to eat.
- Even small traces of peanut or tree nuts can trigger an allergic reaction. In households where nuts are eaten, extra care is needed in food preparation, cooking and storage in order to minimise the risk of cross contamination. However, the safest approach is to not have nuts in the home.
- Only eat foods you are certain don't contain nuts and if you are unsure, leave it out!
- Avoid foods without labels (e.g. from a bakery or delicatessen) and high risk foods such as Indian and oriental curries and stir-fries, and Italian dishes with pesto sauce that may contain peanut or other nuts.
- Read food ingredient labels to check for nuts every time you buy, as product ingredients or manufacturing processes may change.
- All food products with "may contain" warnings are best avoided. However, if you choose to take a calculated risk, only eat foods with these warnings if you have your emergency medication to hand and are within easy reach of a hospital. Avoid: if unwell or asthma poorly controlled; if previously reacted to trace amounts of nut; or after strenuous exercise or drinking alcohol.
- Teach your child about their nut allergy - how to identify different nuts and to refuse foods unless they are sure it is safe.
- Remember to also reassure your child about all the nut free foods they can safely eat. Children should be encouraged to join in social activities and school trips whenever possible.
- Make sure your emergency plan and medication is always up-to-date and carried at all times.
- Ensure that friends, relatives, work colleagues, childminders, nursery or school are given a copy of your emergency treatment plan and know what to do if an allergic reaction should occur.
- Ensure you and relevant family members have regular training to feel confident giving emergency medication if required.

Notes:

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Formatted and edited by FASG editing team - for details see www.bda.uk.com

MI_14488114_30/09/2024_V_1 Review Date: 30.09.2027

