

Fact Sheet

(CHS_FS-GNA_026)

PEANUT ALLERGY

Peanut allergies are severe and minute amounts on contact or ingestion may cause an anaphylactic reaction. Approximately 1% of the population is allergic to peanuts.

“Peanut” is a legume and is in the same family as soybean, chickpeas or garbanzo beans, lima beans, peas, pinto beans, and lentils – therefore, not really a nut. Reactions to more than one member of the legume family are rare, but these foods may also need to be eliminated if allergy to them has been previously demonstrated. Hypersensitivity to peanuts (**ground nuts**) does not necessarily mean that a reaction will occur to **tree nuts** such as pecans, walnuts or almonds.

Dietary Treatment

All sources of peanuts must be eliminated from the diet.

Foods That Must Be Avoided	Products That May Contain Traces of Peanuts
<p>Beer nuts Chopped peanuts Cold-pressed peanut oil Defatted peanuts Egg rolls Expelled or expressed peanuts Extruded peanut oil Flavoured nuts Fresh peanuts Granulated peanuts Ground nuts High-protein food Hydrolysed plant protein Hydrolysed vegetable protein Marzipan Mixed nuts Nougat Peanut flour Peanut soup Peanuts – Roasted Shelled, Whole, Roasted in Shell Peanut butter Peanut butter chips Peanut butter candy Peanut oil* Peanut flakes Peanut syrup</p>	<p>Pie crusts Cheesecake crusts Chocolate candy Ice cream Baked goods Sauces and dressings Potato Crisps Fried food Chilli Sweets Cereal and cereal bars Most foods from all food groups may be consumed if peanut ingredients are not identified on the label.</p>
<p>* Pure peanut oil, unless it is cold pressed, is usually not a problem for a peanut-sensitive individual. However, if there is a history of anaphylaxis on peanut ingestion, it is advisable to avoid all peanut oil.</p>	
<p>Peanut and peanut products can be listed in the ingredients under different names: ground nuts, earth nuts, monkey nuts, mixed nuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, arachis oil and ground nut oil.</p>	

Source: Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
Last Updated: January 2003
Review Date: January 2006

Fact Sheet

▪ Factors Which May Contribute To Ingestion of Peanuts

- Incomplete or inadequate labelling of food or packages thereof.
- Failure to read food labels.
- Ignorance of food allergy problems by restaurants, school personnel etc.
- Not always inquiring about contents of foods regardless of where prepared.
- Trying to taste a tiny bit of unknown but suspected food to see if it contains peanut.
- Having peanut products in the home or school lunchroom of a peanut sensitive individual.
- Peanuts that have been altered and sold as walnuts, almonds or pecans.
- Sharing food or utensils.
- Residue of peanut material on a wiped counter top, cutlery or plates.

Some Useful Tips

- Do not eat any food that has touched peanuts or use any utensil used in the preparation of peanut-containing dishes.
- Remember that peanut powder, peanut butter and peanuts may be used in casseroles, sprinkled on top of dishes or used as an ingredient.
- Be extra careful when eating at social functions or dining out. Take extra precautions when dining at Asian, Chinese, Thai, Mediterranean and Indian restaurants and these restaurants use many different forms of peanuts in multiple ways.
- It is unsafe to pick out a "safe" nut from a mixture containing peanuts; or to pick the peanuts out of a prepared dish.
- Impress upon your child that it is essential to follow the restricted diet to safeguard health. Make the diet a normal part of the household, and involve the whole family. Give your child as much control over food choices as possible – they will be more accepting of restrictions.
- Stress the importance of eating only their food at school and that sharing is prohibited. Discuss appropriate options from the tuckshop, and ensure the convenor is aware of the restrictions.
- Send special treats for your child to school for parties and other festivities, ensuring there is enough for all the children.
- Where possible, contact the manager of a restaurant 2-3 days prior to dining out. Explain why peanuts must be avoided. Find out if any form of peanuts is used as a recipe ingredient or as a garnish, or if the food is cooked in peanut oil. Never assume that a dish is peanut free because the menu description does not mention "peanut/s".

Travelling With A Peanut Allergy

- Alert friends and relatives that you may be staying with while on your trip as to the kinds of foods to avoid, outlining the dangers of contamination also.
- Coordinate your need with airlines. (Remember, the airline will not guarantee 100% peanut free, so remember to follow physician's instructions and to alert flight crew in the event of an emergency).
- Have plenty of allowed snacks on hand.
- Investigate your destination – hospitals, clinics, restaurants etc.
- If language is an issue, learn enough of the foreign dialect to converse about the peanut allergy.

Currently, food additives may contain traces of peanuts and for information regarding from where additives are sourced, it is necessary to contact the manufacturer of the food. The Australian and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) asserts that under new regulations it will become mandatory for all manufacturers to label the source of an ingredient (including food additives and processing aids) when they are derived from nuts and peanuts.

Source: Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
Last Updated: January 2003
Review Date: January 2006

Fact Sheet

It is imperative that no matter how familiar one becomes with the peanut-free diet, ingredient labels of pre-packaged foods or ingredients used in food prepared at home must always be checked, and updated ingredients lists at restaurants reviewed regularly, as food manufacturers and restaurants can change their ingredients at any time.

- **Useful Web Sites**

www.peanutallergy.com
www.peanutallergyresource.com
www.nuttinwithnuts.com/
www.drkoop.com
www.allergicchild.com/peanut_allergy.htm
www.anzfa.com.au
www.livingwithout.com/feature_peanuts.htm

For more information contact the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District:

p (07) 3636 8580
f (07) 3636 1978
e Judy_Wilcox@health.qld.gov.au

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
Level 4 Coles Building
Herston Road
Herston Qld 4029

Source: Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
Last Updated: January 2003
Review Date: January 2006