



Peanut Allergy

Allergy to peanuts appears to be on the rise. One study showed that from 1997 to 2002, the incidence of peanut allergy doubled in children. Peanuts can trigger a severe reaction. The severity of a reaction depends on how sensitive an individual is and the quantity consumed.

Some Unexpected Sources of Peanut

- Sauces such as chili sauce, hot sauce, pesto, gravy, mole sauce, and salad dressing
- Sweets such as pudding, cookies, and hot chocolate
- Egg rolls
- Potato pancakes
- Pet food
- Specialty pizzas
- Asian and Mexican dishes
- Some vegetarian food products, especially those advertised as meat substitutes
- Foods that contain extruded, cold-pressed, or expelled peanut oil, which may contain peanut protein
- Glazes and marinades

Keep in Mind

- Some alternative nut butters, such as soy nut butter or sunflower seed butter, are produced on equipment shared with other tree nuts and, in some cases, peanuts. Contact the manufacturer before eating these products.
- Discuss with your primary doctor or allergist whether to avoid tree nuts. People allergic to peanuts may develop allergies to other foods, including tree nuts. In addition, the chance of a reaction due to cross-contact between peanut and tree nuts during the manufacturing process will be lowered if you avoid them altogether.

- Ice cream served in ice cream parlors should be avoided; cross-contact occurs frequently because of shared scoops.
- Sometimes, foods that are supposed to contain almonds or other tree nuts contain peanuts instead.
- Peanuts go by many names, such as ground nuts, beer nuts, or monkey nuts. Use caution if you are unsure!
- Studies show that most allergic individuals can safely eat peanut oil (not cold pressed, expelled, or extruded peanut oil—sometimes represented as gourmet oils). If you are allergic to peanuts, ask your doctor whether or not you should avoid peanut oil.
- Younger siblings of children allergic to peanuts may be at increased risk for allergy to peanuts. Your doctor can provide guidance about testing for siblings.
- Peanuts can be found in many foods and candies, especially chocolate candy. Check all labels carefully. Contact the manufacturer if you have questions.
- Peanuts can cause severe allergic reactions. If prescribed, carry epinephrine at all times. Learn more about anaphylaxis.

Commonly Asked Questions

Can peanut allergy be outgrown?

Although once considered to be a lifelong allergy, recent studies indicate that up to 20% of children diagnosed with peanut allergy outgrow it.

Can alternative nut butters (i.e., cashew nut butter) be substituted for peanut butter?

Many nut butters are produced on equipment used to process peanut butter, therefore making it somewhat of a risky alternative. Additionally, many experts recommend peanut-allergic patients avoid tree nuts as well.

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