



Bayside Medical Group, Inc.

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PEDIATRICS  
ALLERGY-SHELLFISH

## Shellfish Allergy

**A**n estimated 2.3% of Americans—that's nearly 7 million people—are allergic to seafood, including fish and shellfish. Shrimp, crab, and lobster cause most shellfish allergies.

Allergy to shellfish is considered lifelong; once a person develops the allergy, it is unlikely that they will lose it.

Approximately 60% of those with shellfish allergy first experienced an allergic reaction as an adult. To avoid a reaction, strict avoidance of seafood and seafood products is essential. Always read ingredient labels to identify shellfish ingredients. In addition, avoid touching shellfish, going to the fish market, and being in an area where shellfish are being cooked (the protein in the steam may present a risk).

### Keep in Mind

- If you have seafood allergy, avoid seafood restaurants. Even if you order a non-seafood item off of the menu, it is safer to always assume that cross-contact is possible.
- Asian restaurants often serve dishes that use fish sauce as a flavoring base. Exercise caution or avoid eating there altogether.
- Shellfish protein can become airborne in the steam released during cooking and may be a risk. Stay away from cooking areas.

- Many people who are allergic to shellfish are allergic to more than one kind. Talk to your doctor so that you know for sure what foods to avoid.

### Commonly Asked Questions

#### *Should carrageenan be avoided by a shellfish-allergic individual?*

Carrageenan is not fish. Carrageenan, or “Irish moss,” is a red marine algae. This food product is used in a wide variety of foods, particularly dairy foods, as an emulsifier, stabilizer, and thickener. It appears safe for most individuals with food allergies. Carrageenan is not related to shellfish and does not need to be avoided by those with food allergies.

#### *Should iodine be avoided by a shellfish-allergic individual?*

Allergy to iodine, allergy to radiocontrast material (used in some radiographic procedures), and allergy to fish or shellfish are not related. If you have an allergy to shellfish, you do not need to worry about cross reactions with radiocontrast material or iodine.

*We pledge not only to care for you, but to care about you.*