

EAR, NOSE, THROAT & ALLERGY CENTER

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PEANUT ALLERGY

Avoidance

Avoidance is the main concept in managing a peanut allergy. For those with a life threatening allergy, this means avoiding eating or coming in contact with anything that has even small traces of peanut or peanut butter. Peanuts tend to leave residue on utensils and containers, so caution also needs to be taken to make sure cooking and serving utensils don't contain traces of a peanut product.

For those who have a life-threatening allergy OR who have had an immediate reaction to peanuts, it is important to read labels for all ingredients and to avoid obvious sources of peanut protein, such as peanut butter and peanut flour. Foods that contain peanuts or peanut products may be labeled using words like *peanut extracts, ground nuts, mixed nuts, or natural flavoring, emulsifier, flavourant, oriental sauce*

Be especially aware of packaged and processed foods because they may contain hidden peanuts. Peanuts can be concealed in processed foods like baked goods, candy, cereals, chili, cookies, dips, egg rolls, ice cream and spaghetti sauces.

Education and Awareness

If your child is allergic to peanuts, be sure that everyone who feeds and cares for the child knows about the allergy and what to do in case of an attack. This means the babysitter, teacher, school nurse, school cafeteria, and even friends need to be aware of the potential danger involved. Parents should teach and train their child who is allergic to ask about food they are offered, and, if possible, have an adult read the ingredient label.

There has been a lot of controversy in the news about whether to ban peanuts and peanut products from schools and even on commercial airliners. Many doctors feel that banning the products is not the answer, since it could produce a false sense of security. They feel education and awareness are the keys. Fatal reactions to food allergies can be prevented with careful avoidance and rapid use of epinephrine.

Epinephrine

Those with life threatening or immediate reactions to peanuts absolutely must have at least **one two pack** of epinephrine available at all time. We encourage multiple doses of epinephrine available at the most common locations of the person with this allergy (school, grandparents, day-care, work etc).