



FARE

Your Guide to Food Allergy

Newly Diagnosed With a Food Allergy?
We Can Help.



Learning that you or your loved one has a food allergy can be scary and stressful. Food allergies are serious, but you can learn how to manage them safely.

Meet FARE

FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education) is the leading non-governmental organization advocating for people with food allergy, raising awareness of the disease, and educating the community and the public to help patients stay safe. FARE is also the largest private funder of food allergy research.



Go to foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy for all the resources you need to learn about living well with food allergies.

FARE is here for you and the 32 million Americans with food allergy. Wherever you are on the journey from diagnosis to living with food allergies, you are not alone. **We're here to help, every step of the way.**

Three Important Things You Should Know

- 1. Always carry two epinephrine auto-injectors with you,** and learn how and when to use this life-saving medicine. During a serious reaction, seconds count!
- 2. Not all reactions are the same.** You can have a life-threatening reaction to your problem food, even if you've never had a serious reaction before.
- 3. Any amount of a problem food can cause a serious reaction.** The only way to prevent a serious reaction is to avoid the food entirely.

STEP ONE

Educate Yourself and Others About Your Food Allergy

What Is a Food Allergy?

Food allergy happens when your body's immune defenses that normally fight disease attack a food protein instead. The food protein is called an **allergen**, and your body's response is called an **allergic reaction**.

A person with food allergy makes too much of an antibody called **IgE** that can recognize the problem food. When the IgE and the food come into contact, chemicals such as **histamine** are released and cause symptoms.

People can be allergic to any food,
**but nine foods cause most
food allergy reactions in the U.S.**



milk



egg



wheat



finned fish



shellfish



peanut



tree nuts



soy



sesame

Food Allergy and Food Intolerance — What's the Difference?

Food Allergy

- Immune system attacks a protein in food (example: casein and whey proteins in milk)
- Can be life-threatening
- Can cause many symptoms throughout the body

Non-Immune System Adverse Food Reactions

- Toxins (e.g. bacterial food poisoning)
- Medications (e.g. too much caffeine)
- Intolerance (e.g. inability of substances in the digestive system to break down lactose, a natural sugar in milk)
- Are not life-threatening
- Usually limited to upset digestion, such as stomach pain or gas



40%

Nearly **40%** of children with food allergies have experienced a severe or life-threatening reaction



3 minutes

Every **3 minutes**, a food allergy reaction sends someone in the U.S. to the emergency room

Why Are Food Allergies Serious?

Food allergy reactions are unpredictable. They can be mild or very severe, and a reaction that starts out mild can quickly become life-threatening. Anyone having a food allergy reaction should be watched closely.

The most dangerous allergic reactions are called **anaphylaxis** (an-uh-fil-LAX-is). Anaphylaxis can cause death by making it hard to breathe or pump blood. The only treatment that can stop anaphylaxis is a medicine called epinephrine.

STEP TWO

Be Prepared With Epinephrine and an Emergency Plan

Epinephrine

Epinephrine, also called adrenaline, is a safe, easy-to-use, injectable medicine that can stop the symptoms of a severe allergic reaction.



- **Learn about epinephrine device options** from your health care provider and [foodallergy.org/epi](https://www.foodallergy.org/epi).
- **Have your health care provider train you** to use the device you want, and practice with a trainer device that has no needle and no medicine.
- **Always carry two epinephrine devices with you** in case one doesn't completely relieve symptoms and you need more than one dose of medicine.
- **Tell your friends where you keep your epinephrine** in case you need their help.
- **Visit [foodallergy.org/epi](https://www.foodallergy.org/epi)** to learn about storing and replacing your epinephrine, opportunities to save money on epinephrine, and more.

A written **Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan** is your how-to guide for recognizing and treating reactions. Download it at [foodallergy.org/ecp](https://www.foodallergy.org/ecp).

- **The plan includes:**
 - important health information
 - descriptions of mild and severe reaction symptoms
 - instructions for when to use epinephrine
 - instructions, including diagrams, for how to use each type of epinephrine device
- **Ask your health care provider** to fill out your Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan and talk about it with you.
- **Share the plan with schools and caregivers**, always carry a copy with you, and tell your friends where you keep your plan so they can help you manage a reaction.

You may also want to **wear medical identification** in case of emergency.

STEP THREE

Learn How to Recognize Symptoms and Treat Reactions

Be on the Lookout for Food Allergy Reactions

- The first symptoms of a reaction to food usually appear **between a few minutes and two hours** after exposure.
- Sometimes symptoms can come back hours after treatment; this is called a **biphasic reaction**.
- A reaction can involve one, two, several or many symptoms.
- Symptoms can affect different parts of the body and can be mild to very severe.

MILD SYMPTOMS INCLUDE



Nose: itchy or runny nose, sneezing



Mouth: itchy mouth



Skin: a few hives, mild itch



Gut: mild nausea or discomfort

SEVERE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE



Lung: shortness of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough



Heart: pale, blue, faint, weak pulse, dizzy



Throat: tight, hoarse, trouble breathing/swallowing



Mouth: significant swelling of the tongue or lips



Skin: many hives over body, widespread redness



Gut: repetitive vomiting or severe diarrhea



Psychological: feeling something bad will happen, anxiety, confusion

What Makes a Reaction Mild or Severe?

- A mild symptom in one area of the body is a **mild reaction**.
- Any severe symptom is a **severe reaction**.
- Mild symptoms in more than one body area are a **severe reaction**.

Which Reactions Should Be Treated With Epinephrine?

- All **severe reactions must be treated with epinephrine**, because we can't predict which severe reactions will become life-threatening.
- Your health care provider may recommend an antihistamine to treat mild reactions. **Antihistamines can't stop anaphylaxis and should never replace epinephrine.**

How Do I Treat a Severe Reaction?

- **INJECT EPINEPHRINE IMMEDIATELY!** Don't delay; seconds matter.
- Call 911. Use the word anaphylaxis when speaking with the dispatcher and explain that emergency responders may need to bring more epinephrine.
- Consider giving additional medications following epinephrine, such as an antihistamine or an inhaler (bronchodilator) to treat wheezing.
- Lay the person flat, raise their legs and keep them warm. If breathing is difficult or they are vomiting, let them sit up or lie on their side.
- If symptoms do not improve, or if symptoms return, more epinephrine can be given about 5 minutes or more after the last dose.
- Alert emergency contacts.
- Transport person to the emergency room (ER), even if symptoms resolve. The person should remain in the ER for at least 4 hours because symptoms may return.



FARE
Patient Registry

Share Your Experiences to Fuel Food Allergy Solutions

Your Unique Story Matters

The **FARE Patient Registry** turns your survey answers into research insights that help improve care and quality of life for all who manage food allergies.



Step 1

Sign up and create
a secure profile

5 MINS



Step 2

Complete our
surveys

5-10 MINS



Step 3

Return occasionally
to log food allergy
reactions or take
new surveys

Learn more at:
FAREREGISTRY.ORG



Scan to Receive
Information

STEP FOUR

Avoid Problem Foods

Even the smallest amount of a food allergen can cause a severe reaction. The only way to prevent a food allergy reaction is to avoid the problem food. So how can you know that what you're eating is safe?

Learn How to Read Food Labels

- Always read the ingredient labels on packaged foods. Don't eat foods that aren't labeled.
- Read each label three times: when you buy the product, when you store the product at home, and when you take the product out to serve or cook it.
- Federal law names eight food allergens that must be labeled on products: milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish and crustacean shellfish (examples: shrimp, crabs).
- Labels are not required for other food allergens, including sesame and molluscan shellfish (examples: clams, oysters). Some food allergens may be labeled as "natural flavors" or "spices."
- Some labels name food allergens that might be present (examples: "may contain peanuts," "made on shared equipment with wheat"). This precautionary allergen labeling isn't required by law. FARE recommends avoiding products that have **precautionary allergen labeling** for your problem foods.
- To learn more about food labeling, including tips to avoid common allergens, visit foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy.



Beware of Cross-Contact

- Cross-contact happens when one food comes into contact with another food and their proteins mix. As a result, each food contains traces of the other food that are often too small to see.
- To avoid cross-contact:
 - Never eat food that has come in contact with your problem food.
 - Wash utensils and surfaces well with soap and water before they touch your food.
 - Wash your hands well with soap and water before preparing your food.
 - In a pinch, use commercial wipes to clean hands and surfaces; sanitizing gels and plain water don't remove food allergens.
- To learn more about cross-contact and how to avoid it, visit foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy.

What If I Can't Buy Safe Foods?

To avoid your problem foods and prevent life-threatening reactions you need affordable access to foods you can eat safely. There are programs that can help you access safe and affordable foods.

- Learn about allergy-friendly food banks, pantries, and federal food nutrition service programs at foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy.



Visit
foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy
for more information.



Find Resources for Every Stage of Life

A food allergy diagnosis is life-changing, but it doesn't have to stop you from living well. Visit foodallergy.org/newtofoodallergy to learn about safely managing food allergies at every stage of your journey, from infancy through adulthood. Learn how to navigate preschools and childcare settings, K-12 schools, colleges, universities and workplaces. Explore your rights to food allergy accommodations under current disability law. And thrive safely while dining out, socializing, traveling and more.

Get Connected and Stay Informed

Having a support system is important as you navigate how your life may change with food allergies.

- Find people in your area, or online, going through the same thing with FARE-Recognized Support Groups.
- Sign up for FARE news, product notices and ingredient alerts.
- Help support improvements in food allergy care by joining the FARE Patient Registry.
- Connect with FARE and the community for additional support through events, social media, and subscriptions to our podcast and the Living Teal™ Channel.

[f @FoodAllergyFARE](#) | [t @foodallergy](#) | [i @foodallergy](#) | [v @foodallergyorg](#)

This resource is powered by
the support of



FARE

7901 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 240
McLean, VA 22102

foodallergy.org