

FOOD ALLERGY: A GROWING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS THAT AFFECTS EVERYONE

- Food allergy is a top-tier public health issue in the United States.
- FARE's **National Indicator Report on Food Allergy** tracks the growing public health challenge of food allergy, providing science vetted by a diverse team of subject matter experts and thought leaders.
- This report highlights key data that can guide future research efforts.

**It's a
Disease,
Not a
Diet**

Food allergy is a serious disease of the immune system that affects more than **33 million people** in the United States, which is roughly **1 in 13 children and 1 in 10 adults**.

More adults are developing new food allergy later in life. Among the more than **27 million U.S. adults** with food allergy, nearly **half** developed at least one food allergy during adulthood, and **21%** say that all of their food allergies began after age 18 years.

As this food allergy epidemic grows, so has the frequency of food allergy reactions, which can be life-threatening. **Epinephrine is the only emergency treatment that can stop an anaphylactic reaction.** For years, diagnosis has meant being instructed to strictly avoid allergen exposure, read every label and know every ingredient, and always carry epinephrine.

A recent study estimated the societal costs of food allergy in the U.S. to be **\$370.8 billion**; 15 times greater than the \$24.8 billion estimate for children reported by the same author over a decade ago, with an annual cost per patient of about **\$22,000**.

Healthcare providers, patients and their families, and food allergy allies need the facts—and FARE has gathered them in one place.

A New Era for the Food Allergy Community

The food allergy community is entering a new era of being empowered and ready to act. Patients now have choices for management beyond strict avoidance. These include innovative, needle-free epinephrine administration options, and emerging therapies that can help prevent severe allergic reactions and often allow patients to begin safely consuming small amounts of their allergen.

Looking Forward

The chronic and severe burden of this disease can only be addressed through an aligned approach in the research, advocacy, clinical, and regulatory sectors.

With coordinated action, a world without food allergy is possible. More public health surveys are needed—as well as increased funding for long-term food allergy research, awareness, and education initiatives. Pursuing a cure will require bold initiative and collaboration across scientific disciplines.

Being an ally can be as simple and powerful as understanding that food allergy is a serious disease, respecting food safety needs, recognizing the signs of a severe allergic reaction, and knowing how and when to give epinephrine.

To understand the impact of food allergy in the United States, read FARE's *National Indicator Report on Food Allergy* at FoodAllergy.org/IndicatorReport

The Latest in Food Allergy: Did You Know?

Did you know food allergy can affect more than just physical health?

Food allergy doesn't just affect the body; it affects emotional well-being too. Living with food allergy requires constant vigilance and can create anxiety, depression, and social isolation. In a study drawing on FARE Patient Registry data, **62% of patients** reported mental health concerns related to food allergy.

Did you know many people can't access an allergist?

There are only about 5,200 practicing allergists in the entire United States. That's roughly **1.6 allergists per 100,000 people**. Access is especially limited in rural areas. Only **0.3%** of rural counties have an allergist, compared with **23% of urban counties**, and only **half of allergists** accept Medicaid.

Did you know epinephrine no longer always requires a needle?

Despite its proven safety and effectiveness, research shows that epinephrine is often under-carried and underused. In a 2015–2016 cross-sectional survey of individuals with convincing food allergy, only **24% of adults** and **40.7% of children** reported having a current epinephrine prescription.

Epinephrine has historically only been available in the form of an auto-injector. In August 2024, the FDA approved a needle-free epinephrine nasal spray, and other delivery systems are being actively tested so patients can have even more options in the future.

Did you know that feeding infants commonly allergenic foods starting at 4-6 months can help reduce the likelihood of developing a food allergy?

Science has taught us that food allergy rates can be reduced when babies are fed foods such as peanut and egg early, often, and in a developmentally appropriate way. Previous guidance, published in 2000, used to recommend waiting to give infants and toddlers these specific allergenic foods. A landmark study called the LEAP study showed that introducing peanut-containing foods to infants who already had severe eczema or egg allergy around 4-6 months could reduce their chance of developing peanut allergy by more than **80%**.

Did you know a tick bite can cause allergy to meat and other mammalian products?

Alpha-gal syndrome is a food allergy to mammalian products that is caused from a tick bite. Between 2017 and 2022, as many as **450,000 people** in the U.S. may have developed this allergy. Experts believe the true number is much higher, since many cases go undiagnosed or are never formally reported.

Inside the Indicator Report

- 68 pages, 40+ figures and tables, 80+ references
- Sections: "Prevalence of Food Allergy in the United States," "Burden of Food Allergy," "Diagnosis and Management of Food Allergy," "Food Allergy Prevention," "Selected Food Allergy Syndromes"
- Authored by the Food Allergy AWARE Advisory Council and FARE

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About FARE

FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education) is the leading nonprofit organization that empowers the food allergy patient across the journey of managing their disease. FARE delivers innovation by focusing on three strategic pillars—research, education, and advocacy. FARE's initiatives strive for a future free from food allergy through effective policies and legislation, novel strategies toward prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, and building awareness and community.

About This Project

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