

HHHK - Food Allergies

Researchers estimate that 32 million Americans have food allergies, including 5.6 million children under age 18. That's one in 13 children, or roughly two in every classroom per foodallergy.org

Food Allergies are defined as -Food allergy is an immune system reaction that occurs soon after eating a certain food. It's an abnormal response of the body to a certain food. Even a tiny amount of the allergy-causing food can trigger signs and symptoms such as digestive problems, lowered blood pressure, hives, vomiting, nausea, eczema, cramps, diarrhea, itching, swelling of the lips, tongue, mouth, difficulty breathing, wheezing or swollen airways.

You may not have been diagnosed with a food allergy; however you could have a **food intolerance** which means that it does not affect the immune system, although some symptoms may be the same as in food allergy.

The symptoms of food allergies may mimic or resemble other problems or medical conditions. Please always consult your medical provider.

The most common food allergies in children are tree nuts, wheat and soy. milk, peanuts, eggs, tree nuts and shellfish are the most common and severe allergic reaction. Nearly 5 percent of children under the age of five years old have food allergies.

The most common food allergies in adults are shellfish, fish, tree nuts as well as adult onset of an milk allergy.

Anaphylaxis is a medical emergency. Call 911 to get help right away. Severe allergic reactions are treated with epinephrine.

If you know you have severe allergies, you should carry an emergency kit with self-injecting epinephrine or Epi-pens.

There are three methods of testing and diagnosing food allergies and they

are also used to check for food intolerances.

- 1.** BloodTest-a tube of blood is drawn from the arm and the sample is sent to the lab for testing.
- 2.** SkinTest-this test is done in the office of the Immunologist/Allergist and this is where small device is used to prick the skin and a drop of the suspected allergen is placed.
- 3.** The oral food challenge-feeding test, is a medical procedure in which a food is eaten slowly, in gradually increasing amounts, under medical supervision, to accurately diagnose or rule out a true food allergy. This test is performed in a hospital, clinic or doctor's office,
- 4.** The trial elimination is when the medical provider ask you not to eat or drink the suspected food. This is to see if the systems will improve.

Foods allergies are real health concern and can be deadly. The best course of treatment after diagnosis is Elimination and always carry your Epi-Pen.