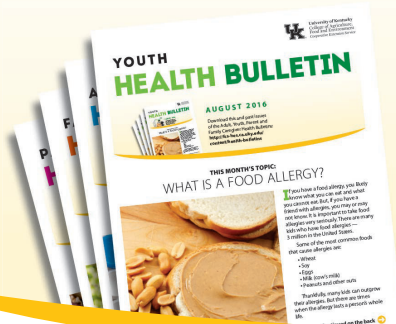


YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?



If you have a food allergy, you likely know what you can eat and what you cannot eat. But, if you have a friend with allergies, you may or may not know. It is important to take food allergies very seriously. There are many kids who have food allergies — 3 million in the United States.

Some of the most common foods that cause allergies are:

- Wheat
- Soy
- Eggs
- Milk (cow's milk)
- Peanuts and other nuts

Thankfully, many kids can outgrow their allergies. But there are times when the allergy lasts a person's whole life.

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If you have an allergy, reading labels on foods is very important and can save you from having an allergy attack.



Unfortunately, if you have an allergy, there is no special medicine that can stop you from having a reaction. The best way to handle a food allergy is to not eat or drink anything that causes an allergic reaction.

Reading food labels is an important part of avoiding allergic reactions. In many cases, you can also talk to your healthcare provider who can provide you with a listing of foods that are safe or not safe. Some people with severe allergies have to pay attention to the labels and look to make sure that the food was not made in the same factory as a food that causes them trouble. If you have an allergy, reading labels on foods is very important and can save you from having an allergy attack.

Whether you have a food allergy or not, it is important to know about food allergies. Sharing food may seem like a great idea, but not knowing if the person you are sharing with has a food allergy could be dangerous too.

→ Continued from page 1

What happens with a food allergy?

Normally, the immune system helps fight off sickness. But when a person has a food allergy, the immune system makes an error. A person who has a food allergy has an immune system that thinks a food is unsafe for him or her to eat. So, it is not the food itself that is bad to eat, but how a person's body reacts to eating that food.

There are signs that can show a person is having an allergic reaction. Some common signs are:

- Hives (a type of skin rash)
- Coughing
- Stomach pain
- Nausea/vomiting
- Tightness in the throat

Some people have very serious allergies. When there is a severe reaction, many problems can occur at one time and it can be life-threatening. People with this type of allergic reaction have to be very careful. There are special medicines that can help and a person with this type of allergy may carry the medicine with them just in case there is an emergency.

REFERENCE:

<http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/food-allergies.html>



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