

# Tips for Managing a Peanut Allergy

Allergy to peanuts appears to be on the rise. One study showed that from 1997 to 2002, the incidence of peanut allergy doubled in children. Peanuts can trigger a severe reaction, particularly in teens and young adults, who appear to be at an increased risk for fatal reactions. The severity of a reaction depends on how sensitive an individual is and the quantity consumed. For some highly sensitive people, simply touching something that has been in contact with peanuts will trigger a reaction.

## Unexpected Sources of Peanut

- Sauces such as chili sauce, hot sauce, pesto, gravy, and salad dressing
- Sweets such as pudding, cookies, and hot chocolate
- Egg rolls
- Potato pancakes
- Pet food
- Specialty pizzas
- Asian and Mexican dishes
- Some vegetarian food products, especially those advertised as meat substitutes

## Alternative Sources of Nutrients

Nutrient	Alternative Dietary Sources
Niacin	Meat, fortified grain products, milk*, eggs*
Folate	Dark green leafy vegetables (broccoli, spinach), legumes (beans, split peas, lentils), strawberries, oranges, fortified cereals
Pantothenic acid	Meat, whole grains (wheat, rye, oats, barley, rice, corn, sorghum, millet), legumes
Magnesium	Legumes, whole grains, seeds, dark green leafy vegetables, bananas
Copper	Organ meats (liver), seafood, seeds
Phosphorus	Milk, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, grains
Zinc	Meat, liver, eggs, seafood

\*Milk and eggs contain large amounts of an amino acid called tryptophan, which can be exchanged for niacin (60 mg of tryptophan are equal to 1 mg of niacin).

- Foods that contain extruded, cold-pressed, or expelled peanut oil, which may contain peanut protein
- Glazes and marinades

## Keep in Mind

- Some alternative nut butters, such as soy nut butter or sunflower seed butter, are produced on equipment shared with other tree nuts and, in some cases, peanuts. Contact the manufacturer before eating these products.
- Discuss with your primary doctor or allergist whether to avoid tree nuts. People allergic to peanuts may develop allergies to other foods, including tree nuts. In addition, the chance of a reaction due to cross-contact between peanut and tree nuts during the manufacturing process will be lowered if you avoid them altogether.
- Ice cream served in ice cream parlors should be avoided; cross-contact occurs frequently because of shared scoops.

- Sometimes, foods that are supposed to contain almonds or other tree nuts contain peanuts instead.
- Peanuts go by many names, such as ground nuts, beer nuts, or monkey nuts. Use caution if you are unsure!

## Tips From Our Families

- *On the plane . . .*
  - “My daughter is extremely allergic to peanuts. I board the plane before her and wipe the tray and seat with a wet and dry cloth to remove any peanut particles. We also try to take morning flights to minimize the chance that peanuts will be served.”
  - “One thing I noticed on our last plane trip was that having my son sit in the window seat next to me prevented him from being next to someone who was eating peanuts.”
- *Educating young children:* “My 2-year-old daughter received a package of play food that included a little box of pretend nuts. I started using that to illustrate that nuts are not for her and can be dangerous. Now, we check all the ingredients on all the food we serve at her little picnics, and she understands more when we check the ingredients on the real food in the grocery store.”
- *Educating others:* “Assume nothing! Some people do not equate a peanut allergy with peanut butter. I have had people ask me if my son could have peanut butter after I just told them that he was allergic to peanuts.”