

Diet and peanut allergy

A peanut allergy occurs when someone's immune system reacts to the protein in peanuts because it thinks it's harmful to the body, which causes a range of different symptoms. Peanut allergies are one of the most common food allergies in Australia, with around three in every 100 children having it. Although children may outgrow some food allergies, peanut allergies commonly last into adulthood (in 75% of children). For people who develop a peanut allergy as an adult, it usually lasts the rest of their life.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction

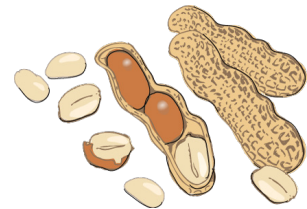
Hives, skin reactions, swelling and gastrointestinal reactions are some of the most common allergic reactions to peanuts and are considered mild.

However some people can experience severe, life threatening reactions to peanuts. This includes anaphylaxis which involves breathing difficulties and swelling of the throat and tongue.

General allergy management

For basic tips to manage your food allergy, check out the NEMO resource '*Food allergies – general information and management guide*'. An important part of

managing food allergies is reading all food labels carefully even if it has been used safely in the past, as ingredients may change without warning. It is also important that you are able to manage cross contamination to be able to choose safe foods. Ask your dietitian for further guidance or refer to the NEMO resources '*Label reading for food allergies*' and '*Allergies and avoiding cross contamination*' for more information on these topics. If you do not feel confident about how to manage your allergy, talk to your doctor, allergy specialist or dietitian to get further help.



Peanut allergy management

If you are allergic to peanuts, any products containing peanuts or peanut by-products should be avoided.

The table on page 2-3 includes foods that are naturally peanut free, foods that may contain peanut proteins and foods that should always be avoided.

It is possible for some people to react from just touching peanuts, or from inhaling peanut particles that may

become airborne during cooking. However these reactions from touching or inhaling are very rarely severe. Depending on the severity of your allergy, it may be necessary for you to avoid touching peanuts or being in areas where peanuts are cooked. Your doctor or allergy specialist can advise about what is best for you.

It is also important to remember the risk of finger-to-mouth contamination. This is when someone puts their hands in their mouth after touching an allergic food and accidentally swallows it. This is common with children, so it is very important to teach kids to avoid touching allergens and wash their hands well with warm water and soap.

Other products to be aware of

- Lotions, shampoos, moisturisers and some cosmetic products can contain peanut products (can be called ‘arachis oil’). Depending on what your doctor or allergy specialist has advised you may also need to avoid these products.
- Medications (prescribed and over the counter) and alternative therapies can also contain peanut products (e.g. promethium, sodium peanutate, peanutamide). These should be avoided. Remind your doctor and pharmacist about your allergy every time you get a new prescription or over-the-counter medication.

Food group	Naturally peanut-free	May contain peanuts - READ LABEL – any peanuts present will be declared	Contains peanuts – avoid
Breads and grains	Oats Psyllium husk Rice Wheat Barley Plain/self-raising flour Rice paper sheets	Bread Breakfast cereals and mueslis Foods from bakeries Baked goods (including biscuits, cakes, scones etc.) Pasta and couscous ‘Flourless’ baked goods (often use nut flours) Crackers, corn and rice thins Cake and baking mixes Muesli bars, health food bars	Peanut flour
Meat/ meat alternatives	Fresh meats Eggs Fresh seafood Plain tinned meat and fish (check for ‘may contain’ statements)	Vegetarian patties and sausages ‘Faux’ meats Falafel Tofu (fresh and marinated) Crumbed/ battered meats and fish (packaged, from cafes) Textured vegetable protein (TVP)	Peanuts (also called groundnuts, monkey nuts, goober nuts) Deli meats Mixed nuts, beer nuts Peanut butter

	Dried/canned legumes	Hydrolysed vegetable protein	Nutmeat
Dairy	Cow's milk Goat's milk Soy, rice or oat milk Plain cheese Plain yoghurt Milk powder	Ice-cream Marinated cheeses Flavoured yoghurt Almond milk Flavoured milks	Ice-creams and yoghurts with nuts
Vegetables	Always thoroughly wash vegetables before using. All fresh vegetables Water chestnuts Canned/frozen vegetables	Frozen or take-away potato chips (watch out for beer battered and sharing of contaminated oil) Pickled vegetables Premade vegetable/potato salad Salads with nuts added	Peanut sprouts
Fruit	Always thoroughly wash fruit before using. All fresh fruit Fruit juice Dried fruit Canned/frozen fruit Coconut	Pre-packaged fruit snacks (e.g. fruit bars, dried fruit with yoghurt)	
Sauces		Sauces and marinades (including gravy, pesto, tomato, barbeque, salsa) Glazes Salad dressings Maple syrup Mayonnaise	Satay sauce Peanut sauce
Fats and oils	Butter All other plain oils	Flavoured oils	Arachis oil Cold pressed/expelled/extruded peanut oil
Miscellaneous	Soft drinks Honey Yeast extract spreads (e.g. Vegemite, Marmite) Gum Tea and coffee Vanilla essence Gelatin Nutmeg	Candy, lollies and chocolate (including Turkish delight, nougat, marzipan and fudge) Trail mix/dried fruit mix Desserts Spices/herbs Packet/tinned soups, frozen meals Dips Flavoured milk powders (e.g. Milo) Alcohol (e.g. Frangelico, Amaretto) Natural Flavourings	Bhuja mix Peanut brittle Mandelonas
Cuisines		Mexican, Indian, Asian, Middle Eastern, Vegan, African and Mediterranean	

Note: This is not a complete list of all foods to avoid but is intended as a helpful aid. It is NOT designed to replace medical advice given by your doctor, allergy specialist or dietitian.

What about tree nuts and soy?

The large food group of 'edible nuts' includes both peanuts and tree nuts. Although peanuts are commonly called nuts, they are actually a type of legume. They grow underground and are considered more similar to chickpeas and soybeans than to tree nuts. 'Tree nuts' include a wide variety of nuts including hazelnuts, almonds, pistachios and cashews. Some people who are allergic to peanuts find that they are also allergic to tree nuts, but this is not the case for everyone.

Due to their similarity, some people who are allergic to peanuts may also be allergic to other legumes (e.g. soybeans); however this is not true for everyone. It is important to talk to your doctor or allergy specialist and get a proper allergy diagnosis before cutting out any extra foods unnecessarily. All foods play a valuable role in our health and give us different nutrients. For more information on tree nut or soy allergies please talk to your allergy specialist.

Recipe substitutions:

Just because you have a peanut allergy doesn't mean you have to go without! There are many great substitutes

available to make sure you still get to enjoy the foods you love:

- **Beans:** Roasted chickpeas, soybeans and peas are great substitutes to put in a snack bowl*. They're also high in protein and fibre.
- **Seeds:** Either raw or roasted, they can be used as a snack, in cereals, muesli bars or in salads. You can also find different pastes that are made from seeds (e.g. tahini, pumpkin seed butter) that are a great peanut butter substitute. Tahini can be used as a substitute for peanut butter when making satays or dipping sauces*.
- **Cereals:** Instead of adding peanuts to desserts, baked goods, food stuffing or in crumbing, try different cereals. This includes puffed rice, corn flakes, mueslis and oats*.



*NOTE: These listed substitutes include foods such as chickpeas, soy, wheat and sesame. These substitutes may not be appropriate for you if you have additional food allergies. Use these recommendations with caution.

For further information, go to:

1. **ASCIA** (The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy): the peak professional body of allergy and clinical immunology specialists in Australia. They have lots of resources available on their website to help with living with an allergy - www.allergy.org.au/
2. **Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia**: an Australian organisation that aims to improve awareness of allergies through education and research. They assist with managing allergies for individuals, families, schools, workplaces, the government and food industries. Check out their website

(www.allergyfacts.org.au) for further information and to become a member.

3. **FSANZ** (Food Standards Australia and New Zealand): a government agency responsible for developing codes and standards for foods - www.foodstandards.gov.au

Disclaimer:

This resource provides information on the management of a diagnosed food allergy – it is not meant to replace advice from your doctor, allergy specialist or dietitian. The food and ingredient lists included in this resource are not exhaustive and may change. Individuals with food allergy should always check food labels each time a product is purchased.