

INTRODUCING COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS TO INFANTS

WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

A food allergy is present when the body's immune system mistakes a food item for a harmful substance.

WHICH FOODS CAUSE FOOD ALLERGIES?

While any food can cause an allergic reaction, the 9 most common causes are:

FishMilk

• Eggs

- Wheat
- Tree Nuts (cashews, walnuts, etc.)Peanuts
- SoySesame
- Shellfish

other parts of the body

Allergies to milk, eggs, soy, and wheat are often outgrown; however, peanut, tree nut, and fish allergies typically last. Shellfish allergies may start later in childhood or adulthood.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SYMPTOMS OF A FOOD-ALLERGIC REACTION?

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Bloody stools

- Tingling or itching in the mouthHives
- Abdominal cramping
- Trouble breathing

• Eczema (with other symptoms listed here)

Swelling of the lips, face, tongue/throat or

Redness around the mouth can be common when introducing citrus fruits or tomatoes, and can be normal. If redness lasts for more than 1 hour or is accompanied by other symptoms listed above then it might indicate a food allergy.

Symptoms usually start within minutes after eating the allergenic food and can last more than two hours (although rare). Often times symptoms are just uncomfortable, but some people may have severe, life-threatening reactions.

Continued

HOW CAN I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS A FOOD ALLERGY?

When it is time to begin introducing solid foods, offer one new food every 3-5 days to see how they react.

If you suspect that your child has a food allergy, work with your health care provider to find out which food(s) cause the allergic reaction.

HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF FOOD ALLERGY:

Early introduction of allergenic foods can decrease the likelihood of an allergy being developed. Some common strategies include:

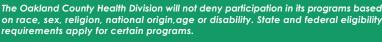
- Introduce common allergy foods between 6 and 12 months.
- Offer ¹/₂ tsp of the allergenic food 3x per week.
- Avoiding allergenic foods during pregnancy or lactation (when there is no maternal allergy) is NOT recommended.
- Give infants a diverse diet while introducing allergenic foods.
- When introducing peanuts and/or tree nuts, only offer in nut butter or powder form. Try mixing it in with cereals such as oatmeal.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI): <u>aaaai.org</u>
- Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE): <u>foodallergy.org</u>

For more information contact Nurse On Call at 1-800-848-5533

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