

PEANUT AND TREE NUT ALLERGY DIETS

AN INDIVIDUAL ALLERGIC TO PEANUTS MAY ALSO BE ALLERGIC TO LEGUMES AND TREE NUTS

Allergies to peanuts and tree nuts are common. It is estimated that approximately one percent of the population, or nearly three million Americans are allergic to peanuts or tree nuts. A peanut is not really a nut at all, but a member of the legume family. Legumes include dried beans, peas, soy beans and lentils. Often, an individual who is allergic to peanuts may also be allergic to legumes.

EXAMPLES OF TREE NUTS

Examples of tree nuts include:

- Almonds • Cashews • Pecans • Pistachios • Macadamia • Pine Nuts • Walnuts

Some individuals have allergies to both peanuts and one or more tree nuts. Many individuals with allergies to a specific tree nut, such as walnut, will often avoid all tree nuts due to the possibility of cross-contamination during food processing. At this time, the only way to treat a peanut or tree nut allergy is to strictly avoid all food products that may contain peanuts or tree nuts. Currently, a vaccine is being developed for peanut allergies for use in the future. It is essential that an individual with peanut and/or tree nut allergies carefully read and understand food labels, ask how food is prepared when eating out, and familiarize him or herself with food additives that are derived from the offending nut.

MAJOR SOURCES OF PEANUTS AND TREE NUTS**

- Peanut Butter • Mixed Nuts • Cold-Pressed Peanut Oil, & Walnut or other Nut Oils
- Anything labeled "Nuts" • Peanut Flour • Almond Butter • Cashew Butter
- Peanuts may also be called "Ground Nuts"

HIDDEN SOURCES OF PEANUTS AND TREE NUTS**

- Pesto • Egg Rolls • Sauces and Gravies • Hydrolyzed Plant or Vegetable Protein
- Nougat, Marzipan, and other Confections • Prepared Salads • Chocolate and other Candies • Salad Dressing • Baked Goods • Breakfast Cereals like Granola and Muesli • Frangelico and Amaretto Liquors • African, Chinese, Indonesian, Mexican, Thai, Vietnamese Cuisines • High energy bars • Grain breads

** For a more comprehensive list of peanut and tree nut-containing foods visit:

www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cfocus/cfallergies04/t_focus2.htm

series articles

FOOD PREPARATION TIPS FOR CUSTOMERS ON PEANUT AND TREE NUT-FREE DIETS

There are a number of peanut and tree nut-free foods that can be purchased through food suppliers (such as *United Natural Foods*), and at local grocery stores. Keep the following tips in mind when preparing peanut or tree nut-free special diets:

- Prepare peanut and tree nut-free meals with clean pans and utensils, and in areas that are separate from major food production.
- Prepare modified meals to order and avoid the possibility of cross-contamination.
- Identify a core team of foodservice personnel in each dining location to work with students who have specialized diets.
- Educate all members of the foodservice team, including management, about the common food intolerances and their symptoms.
- Post lists of ingredients that contain peanut and tree nuts in all food preparation areas.
- Never assume that a product is free of peanuts or tree nuts. When in doubt, avoid using it.
- If a food product label states that it was made in a plant that processes peanuts or tree nuts, do not use it.
- Carefully label all foods in serving areas that contain peanuts or tree nuts.
- Have recipes available for customers to review if they question whether a product on the menu contains peanuts or tree nuts.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT PEANUT AND TREE NUT-FREE DIETS

Q. IS COCONUT CONSIDERED A TREE-NUT?

A. Coconut is not typically restricted in the diet of an individual who is allergic to tree nuts. However, some people react to coconut, and it is best to err on the side of caution, and label foods containing it.

Q. IS NUTMEG SAFE TO EAT?

A. Yes. Nutmeg is not a tree nut. It is obtained from the seeds of a tropical tree and is therefore safe to eat.

Q. ARE WATER CHESTNUTS CONSIDERED NUTS?

A. No, water chestnuts are not true “nuts”. They are the edible portion of a plant root and can be safely consumed by an individual with tree nut allergies.

Special Diets



WHERE CAN I FIND PEANUT AND TREE NUT-FREE FOODS?

There are a number of food companies that specialize in products for individuals with food allergies and medical conditions that require modified diets. The following is a list of companies that produce peanut and/or tree nut-free foods. Many of these companies sell their products through United Natural Foods, which is a Sodexo-approved purveyor.

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| • United Natural Foods, Inc. | www.unfi.com | 800-877-8898 |
| • The Gluten-Free Pantry | www.glutenfree.com | 800-291-8386 |
| • Enjoy Life Foods | www.enjoylifefoods.com | 888-503-6569 |
| • Rebecca's Nut Free | www.rebeccasnutfree.com | 978-352-6644 |
| • Miss Roben's | www.allergygrocer.com | 800-891-0083 |
| • VermontOne | www.vtone.com | 802-879-7127 |
| • Gluten-Free Mall | www.glutenfreemall.com | 707-537-3011 |
| • Cherrybrook Kitchen | www.cherrybrookkitchen.com | 866-458-8225 |
| • Gluten-Free Pantry | www.glutenfree.com | 800-633-3826 |

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FOOD ALLERGY PLEASE CONTACT:

The Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD. 20857
888-463-6332
www.fda.gov

International Food Information Council
1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 430
Washington, DC 20036
202-296-6540
www.ific.org

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network
11781 Lee Jackson Hwy, Suite 160
Fairfax, VA 22030
1-800-929-4040
www.foodallergy.org

peanut allergies