



Managing Food Allergies

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What is a Food Allergy?

A food allergy is an abnormal immune system response to specific proteins in food. The immune system mistakenly identifies these proteins as harmful substances, triggering the release of chemicals like histamine.

Food Allergy VS. Food Intolerance

Comparison	Food Allergy	Food Intolerance
Mechanism	Immune system response	Digestive system response
Amount	Tiny amounts can cause a severe reaction	Symptoms usually appear after large amounts
Onset	Often sudden and rapid	Gradual, may be delayed for hours
Severity	Can cause anaphylaxis	Unpleasant, but not life-threatening

Common Types of Food Allergies

Cow's Milk Allergy (CMA)

- Common in infants.
- IgE-mediated reactions are rapid (swelling, vomiting).
- Non-IgE-mediated reactions are delayed (bloody stools, poor growth), It is different from Lactose Intolerance

Wheat & Egg Allergy

- Wheat: The immune system reacts to proteins like gliadin and glutenin.
- Eggs: Triggered by proteins like Ovalbumin and heat-resistant Ovarumucoid.
- Symptoms include rashes, wheezing, or digestive distress within minutes to hours.

Seafood Allergy

- Fish: Reaction to proteins in fish like salmon or grouper.
- Crustaceans: Reaction to "Tropomyosin" in shrimp or crab.
Inhaling cooking steam in closed areas can trigger symptoms in some people.

Food Dependent Exercise Induced Anaphylaxis (FDEIA)

A rare condition where symptoms (hives, shortness of breath) only appear if exercise is performed within 2-4 hours after eating a specific trigger food.

Management and Prevention

- **Strict Avoidance:** The primary treatment. Read labels carefully; wheat can be in sauces, and milk in margarine or processed meats.
 - **Antihistamines:** Used for mild symptoms like itching or sneezing.
 - **Epinephrine (EpiPen):** The essential first-line treatment for severe, life-threatening reactions.
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When to Seek Emergency Care Immediately?

Seek help if signs of Anaphylaxis appear:

- Severe difficulty breathing or throat tightness.
- Significant swelling of the tongue or throat.
- Rapid, weak pulse or dizziness and fainting.
- Pale face or blue-tinted lips.

Use Epinephrine and head to the ER immediately!



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Fakeeh Care Group