

VIRGINIA  
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST

NETWORK

"Achieving Excellence in Early Care"

# Infants and Toddlers: Food Allergies and Food Intolerance

**A Webinar Presented by the  
Virginia Infant & Toddler  
Specialist Network  
and the Fairfax County  
Office for Children**

**O F C** Office for Children



# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FOOD ALLERGY AND A FOOD INTOLERANCE?

## FOOD ALLERGY

- A food allergy is an **abnormal response** or an **adverse reaction** to a food or food component that is generally harmless.
- This response/reaction **involves the body's immune system**.
- Food allergies **can be very serious** and/or life threatening.

## FOOD INTOLERANCE

- A food intolerance is an **adverse reaction** to a food because the body cannot adequately digest a portion of the offending food.
- This metabolic reaction to food does not involve the immune system.
- A food intolerance is not as serious as a food allergy.



# WHO IS AT RISK OF DEVELOPING A FOOD ALLERGY?

- Anyone can develop a food allergy.
- A family history of allergies increases the risk:
  - If one parent has a food allergy, there is twice the risk.
  - If both parents have a food allergy, the risk is four times.
- A family history of other kinds of allergies (such as asthma, hay fever, eczema) increases the risk of developing a food allergy.



- Food allergies can develop at any time, not just in childhood.



# INTERESTING FACTS

- Compared to 10-15 years ago, 18% more children have been diagnosed with food allergies.
- In children, the number of diagnosed peanut allergies doubled over 5 years, from 1997 to 2002.



# WHAT FOODS COMMONLY CAUSE ALLERGIES?

- Milk



- Eggs



- Wheat



- Soy



- Tree Nuts\*



\*Tree nuts may include cashews, Brazil nuts, pistachios, almonds, pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, and pine nuts.

- Fish



- Shellfish



- Peanuts



# WHAT ARE COMMON SYMPTOMS OF A FOOD ALLERGY?

## Skin Reactions

- Swelling or Itching of Lips and/or Mouth
- Itchy Eyes
- Hives
- Rash/Eczema - Redness of the Skin

## Digestive Tract Reactions

- Cramping
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

## Respiratory Reactions

- Sneezing
- Runny Nose
- Dry Cough
- Itching or Tightness in the Throat
- Shortness of Breath
- Wheezing/Asthma



# WHAT ARE SEVERE SYMPTOMS OF A FOOD ALLERGY?

## Anaphylaxis–Anaphylactic Reaction

- Swelling of Lips/Tongue
- Tightness in Throat (cannot get air – throat feels like it is swelling shut)
- Breathing Difficulties
- Lowered Blood Pressure
- Unconsciousness
- Possible Death, if medical help isn't received

**Immediately call 9-1-1**



If a child needs assistance, call 9-1-1. Then have someone call the child's parent while you provide assistance and comfort until medical care arrives.

# WHEN DO SYMPTOMS OF A FOOD ALLERGY USUALLY OCCUR?



Symptoms usually occur within a few hours after the food is eaten, however, there can be a delayed reaction up to several days after the food is consumed.

The severity of the reaction depends upon:

- How allergic the person is (how strong the immune system response is to the food).
- How much of the food the person ate.

For example: 1/44,000 (a tiny amount) of a peanut kernel can cause an allergic reaction in a severely allergic person.



# WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF FOOD INTOLERANCE?

Symptoms of food intolerance may resemble the symptoms of a food allergy.

Common Foods That Can Cause Intolerance Include:

- Milk or Dairy Products such as Cheese, Ice Cream, or Yogurt
- Foods Containing Sulfites
- Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)
- Food Additives



# WHAT IS LACTOSE INTOLERANCE?

## Lactose Intolerance

- The natural sugar in milk is called **LACTOSE**.
- Lactose intolerance is an adverse reaction because the body cannot digest milk or milk-based products.
- Lactose intolerance is caused by a deficiency of a digestive enzyme that is called **LACTASE**.
- The enzyme lactase is needed to help breakdown the natural sugar (lactose) in milk.
- People who are lactose intolerant do not have sufficient amounts of lactase, an enzyme, to process the natural sugar, lactose, in milk and milk-based products.



# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF LACTOSE INTOLERANCE?

**Common Symptoms of Lactose Intolerance Include:**

- **Gas**
- **Bloating**
- **Abdominal Pain**

**Symptoms of lactose intolerance may occur immediately or within several hours after drinking milk or eating milk-based products.**

**People with lactose intolerance may be able to drink small amounts of milk or eat small amounts of milk-based products, such as cheese and yogurt, without experiencing symptoms.**

**People who are highly intolerant to milk may be able to drink lactose-free milk, such as LACTAID® or calcium-fortified soy or rice milk.**



# HOW ARE FOOD ALLERGIES DIAGNOSED?

Only a health care professional can diagnose the difference between a food allergy and a food intolerance.

It is very important to have a health care professional make a proper diagnosis.

## FOOD ALLERGY

A food allergy is diagnosed based on the immune system's response or reaction after eating an offending food.

## FOOD INTOLERANCE

A food intolerance is diagnosed based on the symptoms that occur after eating a specific food.



**Only about 3-6% of children have been diagnosed with food allergies.**

**Proper diagnosis between a food allergy and a food intolerance is VERY IMPORTANT.**

## **Steps to a Food Allergy Diagnosis**

- 1. Parents consult a health care professional. The health care professional reviews the child's medical history and conducts a complete physical exam.**
- 2. Based on the recommendation from the health care professional, parents and child care providers/teachers monitor the foods the child eats.**
  - Food Diary – daily record of food eaten**
  - Elimination Diet – under medical supervision**
  - Food Challenges – under medical supervision**
- 3. The health care professional confirms the food allergy by conducting skin tests or other tests.**

# WHAT RESPONSIBILITY DOES A CAREGIVER HAVE IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF A FOOD ALLERGY OR A FOOD INTOLERANCE?

## Important Steps

1. **RECORD** all foods/beverages for infants and toddlers even if food allergies are not suspected. Complete a daily food diary form for all infants and toddlers and record any reaction a child may have to foods or beverages.

(EXAMPLES OF FOOD DIARIES ARE INCLUDED IN THIS PRESENTATION)

2. **REPORT** to the parents any unusual reactions or symptoms a child has after eating a food or drinking a beverage.
3. **SUPPORT** the child's parents by following the recommendations of a health care professional if a child needs to be on an elimination diet.



**Remember to partner with parents as they introduce new foods to infants and toddlers.**

- Parents need to introduce new foods at home.
- Only serve foods to infants and toddlers that have been tried at home.

# WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES AND FOOD INTOLERANCES?

## 1. Avoid the Offending Food

Eliminate offending foods from the child care program.

For example, make your program “NUT FREE” if a child has an allergy to nuts.

## 2. Provide a Healthy Diet

If a child has been diagnosed with a food allergy, a registered dietitian will indicate appropriate foods that can be substituted so that the child has a balanced diet.

## 3. Read Product Nutrition Labels

Many foods have numerous names. Be aware of alternative names for ingredients in common foods. (REFER TO FOOD ALLERGY INFORMATION SHEETS HANDOUT)

## 4. Avoid Cross-Contamination

Make sure food items, eating surfaces, and utensils do NOT come into contact with food to which a child has an allergy.



## 5. Know Your Emergency Plan

- For any child with a diagnosed food allergy, make sure the parents give you a copy of the health care treatment plan and that you understand exactly what to do.
- For every child with a food allergy, create a child care emergency plan so that you know what to do in case the child has a reaction to an offending food.
- Practice emergency procedures and review them frequently.

## 6. Encourage All Children to Help

- Infants and toddlers may be unaware of food allergies and food intolerances, however, as children get older, they recognize that there are differences in what other children can or cannot eat.
- If you have children with allergies, make sure that older children understand that some of their friends have food allergies.
- Ask the children to help keep their friends “safe” from any foods that could make them sick.
- Practice what to do to keep children safe so that all children can be included in all eating and cooking activities together.
- Help children learn to use the words “I’m allergic to...” rather than just saying that they don’t like a particular food.





## 7. Read and Understand Food Labels

Reading labels is an effective way to identify which ingredients are in a product.

Many foods have **numerous names**.

**Be AWARE** of what to look for on food labels.

(REFER TO FOOD ALLERGY INFORMATION SHEETS HANDOUT)

**Cow's Milk** could be listed as:

- Casein or Caseinates
- Hydrolysates
- Lactalbumin, Lactalbumin Phosphate
- Lactoglobulin
- Lactose
- Rennet Casein
- Whey or Whey Powder

**Wheat** could be listed as:

- Bran
- Bulgur
- Cracker Meal
- Durum
- Enriched Flour
- Farina
- Gluten
- Graham Flour
- Malt
- Modified Food Starch
- Semolina
- and more



# EXAMPLES OF FOOD LABELS



## ACTIVIA Blueberry Yogurt



### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 container (113g)  
Servings Per Package 4

#### Amount Per Serving

Calories 150    Calories from Fat 35

#### % Daily Value\*

**Total Fat** 4g    **6%**

Saturated Fat 2.5g    **13%**

Trans Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 15mg    **5%**

**Sodium** 100mg    **4%**

**Potassium** 240mg    **7%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 23g    **8%**

Dietary Fiber <1g    **2%**

Sugars 20g

**Protein** 6g    **12%**

Vitamin A 0%    •    Vitamin C 0%

Calcium 20%    •    Iron 0%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Potassium		3,500mg	3,500mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	20g
Protein		50g	20g

**INGREDIENTS:** CULTURED GRADE A MILK, BLUEBERRY PUREE, WATER, STABILIZER BLEND (MODIFIED FOOD STARCH, KOSHER GELATIN, PECTIN), MILK PROTEIN CONCENTRATE, CONTAINS LESS THAN 1% OF WHEY PROTEIN CONCENTRATE, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, CARMINES (FOR COLOR), NATURAL FLAVOR, AGAR AGAR, GUAR GUM, CARRAGEENAN, CITRIC ACID, SODIUM CITRATE.

CONTAINS THE ACTIVE CULTURES *L.BULGARICUS*, *S.LACIS*, AND *BIFIDOBACTERIUM LACTIS* DN 173-010

Ingredients: Cultured Grade A Milk, Sugar, Blueberry Puree, Water, Stabilizer Blend (Modified Food Starch, Kosher Gelatin, Pectin), Milk Protein Concentrate, Contains Less Than 1% of Whey Protein Concentrate, Modified Corn Starch, Carmine (For Color), Natural Flavor, Agar Agar, Guar Gum, Carrageenan, Citric Acid, Sodium Citrate.

with **8** General Mills **Whole Grain**



# Cheerios

Toasted Whole Grain Oat Cereal



**Clinically PROVEN to Help Reduce Cholesterol!** see back

Three grams of whole grain daily from whole grain oat foods like Cheerios is a lot for a kid. So for you and children, we reduce the fiber of heart-healthy Cheerios powder to 1 gram per serving.

NET WT 14 OZ (396g)

**INGREDIENTS:** WHOLE GRAIN OATS, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, SUGAR, OAT BRAN, SALT, CALCIUM CARBONATE, OAT FIBER, TRIPOTASSIUM PHOSPHATE, CORN STARCH, WHEAT STARCH, VITAMIN E (MIXED TOCOPHEROLS) ADDED TO PRESERVE FRESHNESS.  
**VITAMINS AND MINERALS:** IRON AND ZINC (MINERAL NUTRIENTS), VITAMIN C (SODIUM ASCORBATE), A-B VITAMIN (NIACINAMIDE), VITAMIN B<sub>6</sub> (PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE), VITAMIN D<sub>2</sub> (BIOFLOAVIN), VITAMIN D<sub>3</sub> (THIAMIN MONONITRATE), VITAMIN A (PALMITATE), A-B VITAMIN (FOLIC ACID), VITAMIN B<sub>12</sub>, VITAMIN D.

DIST. BY **General Mills Cereals, LLC**  
 GENERAL OFFICES, MPLS., MN 55440 USA

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May be mfg. under U.S. Pat. Nos.: 5,433,490; 5,523,109; 7,021,522

Exchange: 1½ Starch

Exchange calculations based on the Exchange Lists for Meal Planning. ©2003 The American Dietetic Association, the American Diabetes Association.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (28g)  
 Children Under 4 - ¾ cup (21g)  
 Servings Per Container about 14  
 Children Under 4 - about 19

Amount Per Serving	Cheerios	with 1/2 cup skim milk	Cereal for Children Under 4
<b>Calories</b>	100	140	80
Calories from Fat	15	20	10
<b>% Daily Value**</b>			
<b>Total Fat</b> 2g*	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	1.5g
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	0g
Trans Fat 0g			0g
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g			0g
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5g			0g
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	0mg
<b>Sodium</b> 190mg	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>	140mg
<b>Potassium</b> 170mg	<b>5%</b>	<b>11%</b>	130mg
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 20g	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	15g
Dietary Fiber 3g	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	2g
Soluble Fiber 1g			0g
Sugars 1g			1g
Other Carbohydrate 16g			12g
<b>Protein</b> 3g			2g

			% Daily Value
Protein	-	-	9%
Vitamin A	10%	15%	10%
Vitamin C	10%	10%	10%
Calcium	10%	25%	8%
Iron	15%	15%	50%
Vitamin D	10%	25%	6%
Thiamin	25%	30%	35%
Riboflavin	25%	35%	35%
Niacin	25%	25%	35%
Vitamin B <sub>6</sub>	25%	25%	45%
Folic Acid	50%	50%	60%
Vitamin B <sub>12</sub>	25%	35%	30%
Phosphorus	10%	25%	8%
Magnesium	10%	10%	10%
Zinc	25%	30%	30%
Copper	2%	2%	2%

\*Amount in cereal. A serving of cereal plus skim milk provides: 2g total fat (0.5g saturated fat, 1g monounsaturated fat), less than 5mg cholesterol, 250mg sodium, 210mg potassium, 26g total carbohydrate (7g sugars) and 7g protein.

\*\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily

**Ingredients: Whole Grain Oats (includes the oat bran), Modified Corn Starch, Sugar, Salt, Tripotassium Phosphate, Wheat Starch, Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols) Added to Preserve Freshness.**

# IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

## KNOW...

- Which Foods Are Safe For The Children In Your Care To Eat
- Which Foods To Avoid
- What Words To Look For On Product Ingredient Labels
- The Common Substitutes For A Food That A Child Cannot Eat
- How To Keep All Children Safe
- How To Include All Children In Eating (Snacks and Meals) and Cooking Activities



# Online Resources

**American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology**

[www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)

**Kids With Food Allergies Foundation**

[community.kidswithfoodallergies.org](http://community.kidswithfoodallergies.org)

**Mayo Clinic**

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/food-allergy/DS00082](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/food-allergy/DS00082)

**National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases**

[www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov)

**The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN)**

[www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)

**United States Food and Drug Administration (Food Labels and Ingredient List Requirements)**

[www.fda.gov/food](http://www.fda.gov/food)

