

James Tarbox, M.D.

What are the most common food allergies among children and adults?

Do food allergies change depending on the time of the year?

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So nine of the most common food allergies that make up about 90% of the reactions people have are milk, egg, wheat and soy, tree nut, peanuts, fish and shellfish, and then sesame was just added in 2023 as far as food allergies changing depending on the time of year, there is a subset called oral allergy syndrome, and that's where people can have reactions to different fruits and vegetables. And that can change on the time of year, depending on if they're allergic to certain trees, grasses and weeds.

What are the symptoms of food allergies and how does it differ from food intolerance?

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So food allergies that can have a pretty broad reaction can be mild where you have, maybe a localized skin rash can also have more severe reactions, like wheezing, shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, as well as a drop in blood pressure and seizures. As far as food intolerances are concerned, those tend to be more related to digestion of foods with enzymes and breaking the food down. Those tend to be more localized and mild, related to the GI tract.

What should we do when someone is having an allergic reaction?

1:24

I think part of it would depend on their history and severity. If it's just a rash or hives, you could probably treat it with antihistamines, but depending on their reaction, especially severity, it would be really important to understand how to use an epinephrine auto injector.

What precautions should we take to prevent an allergic reaction?

1:48

That goes back to knowing what the history is with the food allergy. I think a few things you can do is just you or the person who has the food allergy, should be very aware what's going into their foods, making sure that who's ever preparing it knows the precautions to take, as well as not to cross contaminate the food, maybe with A utensil or a pan, depending on where the person who has a food allergy is, you want to make sure say, if they go off to summer camp, that everyone there is aware what they're allergic to, as well as having medication in order to treat a reaction.

Anything else to add?

2:37

Yeah, there's been, there's a lot of new therapies that are coming out to potentially prevent or treat food allergy, omalizumab, or Xolair, which has been around for quite a while to treat asthma and chronic hives, was approved this past February, as far as lessening reactions with food allergy. So that's a possible option. There's also a patch that they're trying to get approved

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right now for peanut allergy that might be useful, especially in infants and young kids. And then lastly, hopefully this year or next year, there should be a nasal form of epinephrine, which could be helpful because there are a decent amount of people who are needle adverse and one of the most important things you can do if someone's having a severe reaction food allergy is to make sure they get epinephrine quick enough.