

# Avoiding nuts when you are allergic to them (children)

Nutrition and Dietetics

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Information for children

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## Information for children with nut allergy

An allergic reaction to nuts is relatively rare, but when it happens it is often a severe reaction. Eating a small trace of nuts can cause symptoms like:

- a rash (urticarial)
- vomiting
- swelling of the lips, face and body part
- wheezing
- difficulty in breathing (called a anaphylactic reaction)

## Do I need to stay away from all nuts or just a single one?

If you have had the above type of reactions to a single type of nut (like peanuts), it may be that you only need to avoid that nut. There is a higher risk that you will react to other nuts. A dietitian will let know if you need to avoid all nuts. Ask your dietitian for advice on whether other nuts can be eaten.

Coconut and nutmeg rarely need to be avoided and can usually be added in the diet.

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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## How do I read and check food labels?

You must always check the ingredients of food labels.

- Ingredients that may cause an allergic reaction are often written in **bold** and **large** text. For example, **TREE NUT** or **PEANUT** will be written clearly in bold type or larger font in the ingredients list.
- If a food has no label you must ask if it contains nuts and avoid any foods where ingredients are unknown e.g. at a cake sale, ice cream vans, sandwiches or party food. They could contain hidden nuts.
- Below the ingredients list, it may say '**may contain traces of peanut or other nuts**' or '**made in a factory that handles nuts**'. This is used to show that a food may have been contaminated with these allergens. This is rare and is unlikely to cause a reaction. You **can eat** these foods. But always have your medicine with you in case of mild allergic symptoms. You can talk about this with your doctor or dietitian.
- Recipes and ingredients lists change often. You must always check the label even if it is something you have eaten before.

## What are the nuts I need to look out for in food labels?

Check the ingredients label of all foods for:

- The name of the nut: PEANUT, WALNUT, CASHEW, HAZELNUT
- Ground or chopped nuts
- Nut butters or pastes
- Nut protein
- Roasted nuts
- Ground nut oil

If you cannot see the a label or a food is unwrapped (like loose sweets), **do not eat** these foods. You must be able to check the ingredients on the food you eat.

## What about nut oil?

Vegetable oil may contain nut oil. However, children with nut allergy rarely react to vegetable oil used in the majority of foods.

Specialty nut oils like walnut oil, ground nut oil, may contain nut protein and should be avoided. You should:

- Continue eating foods that list vegetable oil/ vegetable margarine on the label. Do not eat foods with vegetable oil that have a nut warning.
- Use named oil such as olive, sunflower oil for cooking and do not use speciality nut oils like ground nut oil.

## Types of foods that contain nuts

The list below highlights the types of foods that may contain nuts:

- Breakfast cereals
- Biscuits and cakes
- Sweets and chocolates
- Desserts
- Vegetarian foods
- Ethnic meals
- Sauces and salad dressings
- Savoury snacks

## Eating out/ restaurants

Try not to eat at Chinese/ Thai/ Indian restaurants. These restaurants often use nuts and nut oils. The foods are easily contaminated with nuts.

Choose larger chain restaurants. **Always** explain to the staff that you have a nut allergy. Explain that you **must** eat a nut free meal. Do **not** rely on the wording of menus. Always ask if the food has nuts.

## Going abroad

- Try to find out the word for nuts in the local language. This will help you ask for meals without nuts and check labels.
- Find the phone number for an English speaking doctor or emergency services as soon as you arrive. You will then know who to contact in case you have an allergic reaction.
- Try to self-cater rather than eat out if possible.
- Peanuts and foods containing peanuts are very popular in America, so remember to check labels.
- Airlines may also give peanuts with drinks. Some airlines may not do this if you make them aware before you travel.
- Allergy UK offers allergy translation cards: [www.allergyuk.org/living-with-an-allergy/traveling/](http://www.allergyuk.org/living-with-an-allergy/traveling/)



## Information for parents of young children with nut allergy

- Try not to keep foods containing nuts in the house.
- Any food containing nuts should be kept in a locked cupboard or sealed container.
- Do not eat foods containing nuts while your child is in the same room. A left over crumb of peanut cookie or empty packet, may be enough to cause a reaction.
- Make sure friends, relatives, play groups know that your child is allergic to nuts and that they know who to contact and what to do if your child has a reaction.
- Send your own snacks and packed lunch if you are unsure what your child will be given to eat.
- Do not let children feed small rodents (like squirrels, hamsters) or birds. Pets and bird food may contain nuts.
- When going to parties, it may be useful to make your child a badge with 'Nut allergy' on it to ensure other adults do not give your child food without your permission.
- If you have been issued with an antihistamine in medicine or adrenalin/epinephrine injection, make sure you carry it with you at **all times**.

## Will my child always have a nut allergy?

Many people, especially children, grow out of food intolerances. It is unlikely that your child will outgrow their nut allergy, especially if the reaction happened quickly and caused rash or swelling. Your child will likely need to avoid nuts for life. Never assume that your child will have grown out of their nut allergy. Discuss with your child's Dietitian or Doctor if you have further questions.

## Contact details

Nutrition and Dietetic Department: **0116 258 5400**

In the case of an emergency, **call 999**.

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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