

Common Food Allergies

Reviewing ingredient lists while preparing meals at school can significantly ensure that the meals we serve are not only delicious, but also safe for everyone to enjoy!

Understanding Food Allergies

Understanding food allergies is important for maintaining a **safe** and **healthy** environment, especially in schools. Recognizing the distinction between allergies and intolerances is the first step. This is the distinction between a food allergy and food intolerance:

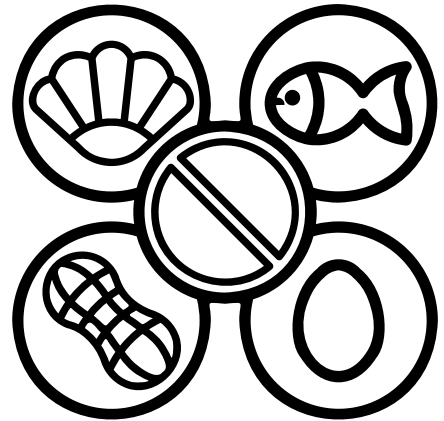
Food Allergy

- **Definition:** An immune system reaction where the body erroneously identifies a food as a harmful invader.
- **Symptoms:** Reactions can vary from mild (e.g., hives, itching, swelling) to severe (e.g., anaphylaxis, difficulty breathing, loss of consciousness).

Food Intolerance

- **Definition:** A digestive or metabolic problem that hinders the body from effectively digesting or absorbing a specific food.
- **Symptoms:** Symptoms are generally gastrointestinal, including bloating, gas, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

In short, while food allergies trigger an **immune response**, food intolerances typically involve the **digestive system**. Knowledge of the top allergens can help in identifying potential risks. Each of these can cause reactions ranging from mild discomfort to severe anaphylaxis in sensitive individuals. Being aware of these common allergens and taking steps to avoid cross-contact when preparing and serving food can **significantly reduce** the risk of accidental **exposure** at your sites!



The Top 9 Allergens

MILK
EGGS
PEANUTS
TREE NUTS
SOY
SHELLFISH
FISH
WHEAT
*SESAME



*AS OF 2021