



Peanut Allergy Facts

- Peanut allergy is the most common life-threatening food allergy in children.
- Peanuts are not actually a nut. They are a legume, similar to soy beans and peas.
- It is often life long but occasionally can be outgrown.
- Common allergic reactions include hives, immediate runny nose, sneezing, watering eyes, coughing, choking or gagging, vomiting and diarrhea. Reactions can progress to anaphylaxis and death.
- Trace amounts of peanut not visible to the naked eye can cause severe allergic reactions even on table tops or toys.
- Food does not have to be eaten to cause a reaction. Persons with severe allergies may react to skin contact or even the odor of peanut.
- Allergic reactions have occurred when food was prepared in a pan or machine that at one time contained peanut products, even though it was cleaned prior to re-use.
- People have been known to react to as little as 1/2000th of a peanut.
- Peanut butter may be used as a "glue" to hold foods together. Examples of these foods are egg rolls and rice squares, granola bars, etc.
- Peanut butter or peanut flour may be added to barbecue sauce or other foods such as chili, mooshu sauce, plum sauce, marinades, curry sauce, pasta sauce, and satay sauce.
- Pet foods may also contain peanut. Dog food, gerbil food, and bird seed. Some children have been known to react after playing with an animal who had been fed peanut containing food.
- Other foods that may contain hidden peanut are cookies, breakfast cereals, cheese and crackers, chocolates, chocolate candies, chocolate covered raisins, and ice cream.
- Peanut generally must be declared on a food label. Exemptions include, Flavor, natural flavor, spice, seasoning, and curry. This is most common with imported foods.
- Peanut allergy is increasing annually in this country, especially in children.
- In the U.S., 8 pounds of peanuts are consumed per person per year, half as peanut butter, one-third as peanuts, and the rest as peanut oil.
- It is believed that the increase in peanut allergy is due to the early exposure to the peanut protein. Children can not properly digest the peanut protein until the age of three.
- For more information visit the Calgary Allergy Network at www.cadvision.com/allergy