

Cross-contact Food Allergies

Why are we concerned about cross-contact food allergies?

In the United States alone, 32 million people have a food allergy. Someone with a food allergy has an immune system response to substances that are normally harmless. This response may cause inflammation, redness, or itchiness. The eight main food allergens include milk, wheat, eggs, soy, shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts, and fish.



What is cross-contact?

Cross-contact is when an allergen is transferred from food or a food-contact surface containing that allergen to a food that does not contain the allergen. A food allergy can be triggered even if you can't see the allergen.

Why is it important to avoid cross-contact?

Allergic reactions can range from an itchy mouth, to hives, to an anaphylactic reaction. An anaphylactic reaction is immediate and can be fatal if not quickly treated with a drug called epinephrine.

How can you prevent cross-contact?

- Prepare allergen-free meals completely separate from meals containing allergens
- Wash hands in between preparing the meals
- Clean and sanitize food-contact surfaces
- Use separate kitchen utensils and tools for the allergen-free meal (different cutting boards, knives, etc.)
- If you think there has been a mistake, start the meal over

For more information visit: www.foodallergy.org/resources/facts-and-statistics

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