

February 8, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Although information was sent home with students in the fall and information is available on the website, I wanted to highlight the importance of not bringing certain food items to school.

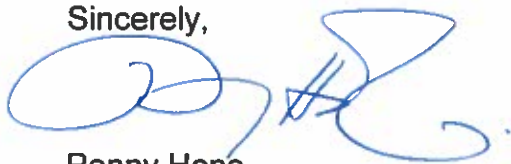
I want to review with everyone the very serious nature of nut/seed allergies. When a student has a severe nut/sesame allergy any contact with nuts/sesame or oil from nuts/sesame can result in a severe allergic response that can result in death.

We have a few students at the school who suffer from allergies that are very severe. We need to ensure that we do not have nut/sesame seed products come into the school. When packing your child's lunch double check the ingredients on all food items to ensure that there are no nut/sesame products in the items. We have had a couple of incidents where people have brought peanut products to school and we need to ensure that this does not happen again by any child or adult.

Please find attached more information about this serious life-threatening allergy. I encourage you to choose items that are guaranteed by the company producing such items to be nut free. It is more difficult with sesame, but please be vigilant.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this very serious situation. If you have any questions please call.

Sincerely,



Penny Hope  
Principal  
Ridpath Junior Public School

# Peanut Allergy

Peanut allergy is one of the most common food allergies. Peanuts can cause a severe, potentially fatal, allergic reaction (**anaphylaxis**). Therefore it is advised that people with peanut allergy have quick access to an **epinephrine auto-injector** (such as an EpiPen®, Auvi-Q™ or Adrenaclick®) at all times. To prevent a reaction, strict avoidance of peanut and peanut products is essential. Always read ingredient labels to identify peanut ingredients.

Allergy to peanuts appears to be on the rise in children. According to a FARE-funded study, the number of children in the U.S. with peanut allergy more than tripled between 1997 and 2008.<sup>1</sup> Studies in the United Kingdom and Canada also showed a high prevalence of peanut allergy in schoolchildren.

Peanut allergies tend to be lifelong, although studies indicate that approximately 20 percent of children with peanut allergy do eventually outgrow their allergy. Younger siblings of children allergic to peanuts may be at increased risk for allergy to peanuts. Your doctor can provide guidance about testing for siblings.

Peanuts are not the same as **tree nuts** (almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc.), which grow on trees. Peanuts grow underground and are part of a different plant family, the legumes. Other examples of legumes include beans, peas, lentils and **soybeans**. If you are allergic to peanuts, you do not have a greater chance of being allergic to another legume (including soy) than you would to any other food.

Trace amounts of peanut can cause an allergic reaction. Casual contact with peanuts, such as touching peanuts or peanut butter residue, is less likely to trigger a severe reaction. Casual contact becomes a concern if the area that comes into contact with peanuts then comes into contact with the eyes, nose or mouth (for example, a child with peanut allergy gets peanut butter on her fingers, and then rubs her eyes).

Based on recent studies, an estimated 25-40 percent of people who have peanut allergy also are allergic to tree nuts.<sup>2</sup> In addition, peanuts and tree nuts often come into contact with one another during manufacturing and serving processes. For these reasons, allergists usually tell their patients with peanut allergy to avoid tree nuts as well.

## Avoiding Peanuts

The federal **Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA)** requires that all packaged food products sold in the U.S. that contain peanuts as an ingredient must list the word "Peanut" on the label.

Read all product labels carefully before purchasing and consuming any item. Ingredients in packaged food products may change without warning, so check ingredient statements carefully every time you shop. If you have questions, call the manufacturer.

As of this time, the use of advisory labels (such as "May Contain") on packaged foods is voluntary, and there are no guidelines for their use. However, the FDA has begun to develop a long-term strategy to help manufacturers use these statements in a clear and consistent manner, so that consumers with food allergies and their caregivers can be informed as to the potential presence of the eight major allergens.

### **Read more about food labels>**

Avoid foods that contain peanuts or any of these ingredients:

- Artificial nuts
- Beer nuts
- Cold pressed, expeller pressed or extruded peanut oil
- Goobers
- Ground nuts
- Mandelonas (peanuts soaked in almond flavoring)
- Mixed nuts
- Monkey nuts
- Nut meat
- Nut pieces
- Peanut butter
- Peanut flour
- Peanut protein hydrolysate

Peanut is sometimes found in the following:

- Baked goods (e.g., pastries, cookies)
- Candy (including chocolate candy)
- Chili
- Egg rolls
- Enchilada sauce
- Marzipan
- Mole sauce
- Nougat

Some Unexpected Sources of Peanut

- African, Asian and Mexican dishes
- Sauces such as chili sauce, hot sauce, pesto, gravy, mole sauce and salad dressing
- Sweets such as pudding, cookies, baked goods, pies and hot chocolate
- Egg rolls
- Pancakes
- Specialty pizzas
- Some vegetarian food products, especially those advertised as meat substitutes
- Foods that contain extruded, cold-pressed or expelled peanut oil, which may contain peanut protein
- Glazes and marinades
- Pet food

\*Note: This list highlights examples of where peanuts have been unexpectedly found (e.g., on a food label for a specific product, in a restaurant meal, in creative cookery). This list does not imply that peanuts are always present in these foods; it is intended to serve as a reminder to always read the label and ask questions about ingredients before eating a food that you have not prepared yourself.

Keep the following in mind:

- Certain food service establishments are considered high-risk for individuals with peanut allergy due to the common use of peanut and the risk of **cross-contact** – even if you order a peanut-free item. These include African, Asian (especially Chinese, Indian, Indonesian, Thai and Vietnamese) and Mexican restaurants; bakeries; and ice cream shops.
- The FDA exempts highly refined peanut oil from being labeled as an allergen. Studies show that most individuals with peanut allergy can safely eat peanut oil (but not cold-pressed, expelled or extruded peanut oil – sometimes represented as gourmet oils). If you are allergic to peanuts, ask your doctor whether or not you should avoid peanut oil.
- A study showed that unlike other legumes, there is a strong possibility of cross-reaction between peanuts and lupine.
- Arachis oil is peanut oil.
- Sunflower seeds are often produced on equipment shared with peanuts.
- Some alternative nut butters, such as soy nut butter or sunflower seed butter, are produced on equipment shared with other tree nuts and, in some cases, peanuts. Contact the manufacturer before eating these products.

## **Sesame Seed Allergies – Yes, they can be life threatening!!!**

**Allergic reactions are severe adverse reactions that occur when the body's immune system overreacts to a particular allergen. These reactions may be caused by food, insect stings, latex, medications and other substances. In Canada, the ten priority food allergens are peanuts, tree nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio nuts and walnuts), sesame seeds, milk, eggs, seafood (fish, crustaceans and shellfish), soy, wheat, sulphites (a food additive) and mustard.**

### **What are the symptoms of an allergic reaction?**

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When someone comes in contact with an allergen, the symptoms of a reaction may develop quickly and rapidly progress from mild to severe. The most severe form of an allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis. Symptoms can include breathing difficulties, a drop in blood pressure or shock, which may result in loss of consciousness and even death.

### **How are food allergies and severe allergic reactions treated?**

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Currently there is no cure for food allergies. The only option for managing the risk is to completely avoid the specific allergen. Appropriate emergency treatment for anaphylaxis (a severe food allergy reaction) includes an injection of epinephrine, which is available in an auto-injector device. Epinephrine must be administered as soon as symptoms of a severe allergic reaction appear. The injection must be followed by further treatment and observation in a hospital emergency room

## **Frequently asked questions about sesame seeds allergies**

### **How can I determine if a product contains sesame seeds or sesame derivatives?**

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Always read the ingredient list carefully.

If sesame is part of the product formulation, it must be declared in the list of ingredients or in a separate "contains:" statement immediately following the list of ingredients

### **What do I do if I am not sure whether a product contains sesame seeds or sesame derivatives?**

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If you have a sesame seed allergy, do not eat or use the product. Get ingredient information from the manufacturer.

### **Does product size affect the likelihood of an allergic reaction?**

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Product size does not affect the likelihood of a reaction; however, the same brand of product may be safe to consume for one product size but not another. This is because product formulation may vary between different product sizes of the same product.

## **Avoiding sesame and sesame derivatives**

Make sure you read product labels carefully to avoid products that contain sesame and sesame derivatives. Avoid food and products that do not have an ingredient list and read labels every time you shop. Manufacturers may occasionally change their recipes or use different ingredients for varieties of the same brand.

## **Other names for sesame seeds**

In the past, some products have used other names for sesame on their labels. These names are not permitted based on the enhanced labelling requirements for food allergens, gluten sources and added sulphites, however, if you have a sesame allergy and see one of the following in the list of ingredients on a product you should not eat it.

- Benne, benne seed and benniseed
- Gingelly and gingelly oil
- Seeds
- Sesamol and sesamolina
- Sesamum indicum
- Sim sim
- Til

## **Food and products that contain or often contain sesame seeds**

- Bread (for example, hamburger buns, multi-grains), bread crumbs and sticks, cereals, crackers, melba toast and muesli
- Dips and spreads, for example, hummus, chutney
- Ethnic foods, for example, flavoured rice, noodles, shish kebabs, stews and stir fries
- Sesame oil, sesame salt (gomasio)
- Tahina
- Tahini (sesame paste)
- Tempeh
- Vegetarian burgers

## **Other possible sources of sesame**

- Some baked goods
- Dressings, gravies, marinades, salads, sauces and soups
- Herbs, seasonings, flavourings and spices
- Vegetable Pâtés
- Snack foods, for example, crackers, sesame snap bars
- Vegetable oil (may contain sesame oil)

## **Non-food sources of sesame seeds**

- Adhesive bandages
- Cosmetics, hair care products, perfumes, soaps and sunscreens
- Drugs
- Fungicides and insecticides
- Lubricants, ointments and topical oils
- Pet food
- Sesame meal, for example, poultry and livestock feed

*Note: These lists are not complete and may change. Food and food products purchased from other countries, through mail-order or the Internet, are not always produced using the same manufacturing and labelling standards as in Canada.*