

## Food Allergies— When Food Becomes the Enemy

**IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE** if eating a peanut butter cookie left you vomiting, gasping for breath or furiously scratching a fresh crop of hives. For some people with food allergies, that is reality.

someone can eat yogurt and cheese and even small amounts of milk on cereal but suffers with gas, bloating or other unpleasant reactions if they drink a large glass of milk, technically this is not a food allergy. In

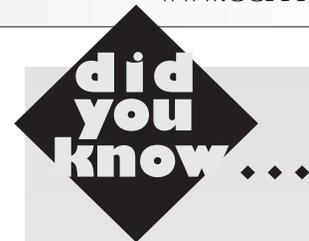
these individuals with lactose intolerance, the body doesn't produce enough of the enzymes required to digest the sugar (lactose) in milk. Many times the person is able to handle small amounts of milk, yogurt or cheese, especially when eaten as a part of a meal. If the person had a true food allergy to the protein in milk, there

would be no "safe" amount and his body would not learn to tolerate any amount of the food. Food intolerance symptoms are generally localized, temporary and rarely life threatening, whereas a food allergy can cause life-threatening reactions.

### Common Food Allergens

The eight most common are milk protein, eggs, wheat, fish, shellfish, soy protein, peanuts and tree nuts.

*(article continued on page 2)*



- ▶ The Kids with Food Allergies Foundation helps keep children with food allergies safe and healthy by educating their families with a free online support community.
- ▶ Up to 8% of children have food allergies.
- ▶ Cases of seasonal flu most commonly peak in the U.S. in January or February. However, flu activity can begin as early as October and continue as late as May.
- ▶ During 2011–2012, 132.8 million doses of flu vaccine were distributed in the United States.
- ▶ People with the flu are normally contagious 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

Sources: [www.kidswithfoodallergies.org](http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org), [www.pediatrics.org](http://www.pediatrics.org), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Quotable Quotes

“As the days grow short, some faces grow long. But not mine. Every autumn, when the wind turns cold and darkness comes early, I am suddenly happy. It's time to start making soup again.”

— Leslie Newman



A food allergy, or hypersensitivity, is an abnormal response to a food, triggered by the immune system. According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately 5 million Americans, (5–8% of children and 1–2% of adults) have a true food allergy involving the immune system.

A food "sensitivity" does not involve the immune system and is called "food intolerance." For example, if

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These foods cause more than 90 percent of all allergic reactions. Many childhood food allergies are outgrown, however an allergy to peanuts, nuts and shellfish are seldom outgrown.

## Food-allergic reaction

During a reaction, the immune system mistakenly believes that a harmless substance, usually the protein in a food, is harmful. In an attempt to protect the body, it produces specific antibodies to that food. The next time the individual eats that food, the immune system releases massive amounts of histamines and other chemicals that cause swelling or constriction in the eyes, nose, throat, lungs, gastrointestinal tract and skin.

## Common symptoms of a reaction

A tingling sensation in the mouth, swelling of the tongue and the throat, difficulty breathing, hives, vomiting, abdominal cramps and diarrhea are all symptoms which typically appear within minutes to two hours after eating the offending food.

## Anaphylaxis

A rare, severe and potentially fatal reaction is called anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock. Breathing passages close up, blood pressure drops and the person could lose consciousness and even die. Symptoms usually appear rapidly, sometimes within minutes of exposure to the allergen, and can be life threatening. Immediate medical attention is necessary.

## Best treatment for food allergy

Strict avoidance of the allergy-causing food is the only way to avoid a reaction. Reading ingredient labels for all foods is the key, and if a product doesn't have a label, individuals with allergies should not eat it. If a label contains unfamiliar terms, call the manufacturer for information. An allergist and dietitian can help manage diet issues without sacrificing nutrition or the pleasure of eating.

If a child has severe allergies, the parent should supply the child care provider and school with instructions and pre-loaded injectors of epinephrine, marketed as EpiPens, which can improve circulation and ease breathing in the event of an emergency.

## Preventing Food Allergies

It is not possible to prevent a child from developing food allergies, but you may be able to reduce the likelihood of allergies developing. If one parent has allergies a child has a 50% chance of being allergic. If both parents have allergies chances increase to 75%.

***For infants at high risk of developing allergies, identified by a strong family history of allergy, recommendations from American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) are:***

- Breastfeed exclusively for six months, with the gradual introduction of solids only after 4-6 months of age.
- Continue breastfeeding for the first year of life or longer.
- Add single ingredient foods to the diet one at a time, with a trial lasting many days prior to additional foods being added. This serves the purpose of knowing which food is to blame should the infant experience an adverse reaction.
- The (AAP) formerly recommended avoiding cow's milk until infants are 1 year old, egg whites until age 2, and tree nuts, peanuts, fish and shellfish until 3 years of age. Newer guidelines published in 2010 by the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) state that there is not enough evidence to delay the introduction of any food, including foods with high allergenic potential, beyond 4 to 6 months of age. They also state there is too little data to support the restriction of allergenic foods in the diet of a pregnant or breast feeding mom.

Clearly the jury is still out on this subject and more studies are needed. We recommended you follow your pediatrician's advice regarding the introduction of highly allergenic foods.

For further information:

International Food Information Council:  
[www.ific.org](http://www.ific.org)

National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases:  
[www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov)

The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network:  
[www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org) 1-800-929-4040

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology:  
[www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)

— Donna L. Green R.D.  
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## KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

# Seasonal Flu – What You Should Know About the 2012-13 Influenza Season

### National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW)

is a national observance that was established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination, as well as fostering greater use of flu vaccine after the holiday season into January and beyond. NIVW will be held **December 2–8, 2012**.

### Who should get vaccinated this season?

Everyone who is at least 6 months of age should get a flu vaccine this season.

It's especially important for some people to get vaccinated. Those people include the following:

- People who are at high risk of developing serious complications like pneumonia if they get sick with the flu, including
  - People who have certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, and chronic lung disease.
  - Pregnant women.
  - People 65 years and older.
- People who live with, have household contact with or care for those who are at high risk of developing serious complications.

### When should I get vaccinated?

- CDC recommends that people get vaccinated against influenza as soon as 2012–2013 flu season vaccine becomes available in their community. Influenza seasons are unpredictable, and can begin as early as October.



- It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu.

### Where can I get a flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, pharmacies and college health centers, as well as by many employers, and even in some schools.

Even if you don't have a regular doctor or nurse, you can get a flu vaccine somewhere else, like a health department, pharmacy, urgent care clinic, and often your school, college health center, or work.

### Why do I need a flu vaccine every year?

- A flu vaccine is needed every year because flu viruses are constantly changing. It's not unusual for new flu viruses to appear each year. The flu vaccine is formulated each year to keep up with the flu viruses as they change.
- Also, multiple studies conducted over different seasons and across vaccine types and influenza virus subtypes have shown that the body's immunity to influenza viruses (acquired either through natural infection or vaccination) declines over time.
- Getting vaccinated each year provides the best protection against influenza throughout the flu season.

— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## Two Potato Soup

Potatoes, peeled	3
Sweet potato, peeled	1
Onion, chopped	1
Chicken broth	15 ounce can
Dill	1 tsp
Milk	1½ cups

1. Chop the potatoes and place in a large saucepan with onion. Add chicken broth and dill and heat to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer about 20 minutes until the potatoes are soft.
2. Mash potatoes with a potato masher, or if a smoother soup is desired, puree the mixture in a food processor or blender. Add milk, heat and serve.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable

— *Quick Meals for Healthy Kids and Busy Parents*

## Broccoli Enchiladas

Broccoli florets	3 cups
Ricotta cheese	1½ cups
Cheddar cheese, shredded	2 cups
Egg	1
Garlic, minced	1 clove
Cumin	½ tsp
Salt and pepper	½ tsp each
Whole wheat tortillas	6
Red enchilada sauce	1½ cups
Chicken broth	1 cup

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Cook broccoli for 3 minutes and drain.
2. Place broccoli, ricotta, 1 cup of cheddar cheese, egg, garlic, cumin, salt and pepper in a food processor. Pulse to blend ingredients, mixture can be smooth or chunky, whichever you prefer.
3. Evenly distribute the broccoli mixture between the 6 tortillas and then roll them up. Arrange tortilla rolls in a single layer in a small baking dish.
4. Mix together the enchilada sauce and chicken broth and pour over the tortilla rolls. Top with remaining cheese.
5. Bake for 30 minutes and let cool in pan for 10 minutes before serving.

Yield: 6 servings

Meets requirement for breads/grains and protein/meat alternate *or* fruit/vegetable and protein/meat alternate

## Activity Corner

### DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE

**YOU NEVER KNOW** when the weather will keep your kids inside for a day or more. And it is important for your kids to get some physical activity every day. Luckily, there are tons of games to play inside to get moving. Even light physical activity is a great way to keep the kids from staring at the television all day.

Duck, duck, goose involves running in a circle to catch another player. All of the children sit in a circle while one player, who is “it,” walks around the outside of the circle, tapping each sitting player’s head and saying, “Duck.” The player who is “it” eventually selects a sitting player and, instead of “duck,” says, “Goose!” The selected, or goose player then stands up and chases the “it” player, who tries to run around the circle and sit in the “goose’s spot” before he is tagged. The “goose” is now “it” if he doesn’t catch the player who tagged him.

— [www.livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com)

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**Food Q: Which Thanksgiving food has grandchildren?**  
**Funny A: Gran-Berry Sauce!**