

Avoiding Peanuts/Nuts in Schools and other Group Settings



Peanuts/nuts cause anaphylaxis in some people. Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be deadly. Symptoms appear suddenly and may include itching, hives, swelling of the throat, difficulty breathing, lower blood pressure and unconsciousness. The reaction occurs when the allergic person comes into contact with the protein in peanuts/nuts. Even unintentionally smelling peanuts/nuts or simply touching something or someone with peanut/nut residue may cause a reaction.

When a child at a school, day care, or camp has a peanut/nut allergy, everyone's cooperation is necessary to help make the environment as safe and peanut/nut-free as possible.

Peanut/Nut Sources: What to watch out for

Foods that contain peanut/nut protein are hazardous to a child with peanut/nut allergy.

When buying commercially prepared and packaged food products read the label carefully. Check the list of ingredients. Recheck the list each time you buy a product to make sure the ingredients have not changed.



Words on labels that tell you peanut/nut protein could be in the product:

arachis oil	mixed nuts
beer nuts	nuts
goober nuts	peanut butter
goober peanuts	peanut flour
goober peas	peanut meal
ground nuts	peanut oil
hydrolyzed peanut protein	peanut protein
hydrolyzed plant protein	peanuts
mandelona nuts*	

The purchase and use of any bulk foods or ingredients is not recommended as cross-contamination can easily occur.

Do not use any foods or ingredients that contain any kind of nuts; commercially prepared foods may be prepared or mixed with peanuts.

* mandelona nuts are peanuts which have been de-coloured and de-flavoured, then artificially flavoured with a nut flavouring such as almond, pecan or walnut and molded to resemble that nut.

Peanut/Nut oil

The process used to make commercial cooking oil gets rid of any protein that is present. Therefore, peanut oil treated this way is probably safe. A different method is used to make cold pressed, expelled or extruded peanut oils. These are not safe because they may contain peanut protein.

Cooking oils become unsafe when they are used to fry foods that contain peanut protein. Protein may leach out into the oil when cooking, which makes it unsafe to eat.

The safest practice is to avoid all peanut oil.

Ingredient listings are not foolproof

Imported foods may come from a country that has different labeling requirements. For example, imported chocolate bars may not list peanuts/nuts on the label, even when they are present. If you have doubts about what is in a product, or you do not know what an ingredient word means, do not eat the food.

Commercial food products may contain very small amounts of peanuts/nuts from equipment used during processing. These small amounts may be enough to cause an anaphylactic reaction. Warnings are usually stated on the label, but not always.



Highly processed foods with many ingredients are more likely to contain peanuts/nuts. They are also more likely to contain peanut/nut residue or hidden sources of peanuts/nuts.

Be very cautious of the following foods:

- **baked goods**
- **candies**
- **chili**
- **cookies**
- **Chinese dishes**
- **chocolate**
- **egg rolls**
- **marzipan (almond paste)**
- **prepared and frozen desserts**
- **prepared soups (especially dried packaged soup mixes)**
- **satay sauces**
- **Thai dishes**

If you are ever in doubt about a product, contact the food company for complete, up to date information about its ingredients or check with the allergic child's parents to find out if it is safe for their child.

Take precautions when preparing foods at home

Use peanut/nut-free ingredients and keep utensils and food preparation areas clean. Wash all food preparation surfaces with warm soapy water.

Baked goods or mixed dishes prepared at home may contain peanut/nut traces, even when there are no peanuts/nuts in the ingredients. Peanuts/nuts tend to leave residue on things like utensils, containers and tabletops. The residue is easily passed on to other foods during preparation.

The safest approach is to have the allergic child eat only foods that are brought in from their own home.

Tips for safe, successful lunches and snacks

There are many healthy food choices available.

A nutritious lunch should contain three or four of the food groups from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating: Vegetables and Fruit (preferably some of each), Grain Products, Milk Products and/or Meat and Alternatives. Combine healthy food choices for snacks or lunch, remembering to read the labels of packaged foods or ingredients you use in home-prepared foods.

Before preparing food, wash hands thoroughly and make sure that all cutting boards, food preparation utensils, counter tops and containers are clean. For items that are to be served hot, rinse out a wide mouth Thermos with boiling water. Add piping hot food and close tightly. A small freezer pack will help keep cold lunch and snack items safe.

Ways to keep children with peanut/nut allergy safe:

- ✓ pack lunches, snacks and treats that are as free of peanut/nut as possible;
- ✓ do not use peanut/nut products such as peanut shells for crafts or in activities;
- ✓ do not allow children to share food or food containers brought from home;
- ✓ keep food preparation areas and utensils used at home clean and free of peanut/nut products;
- ✓ encourage children to wash their hands with soap and clean water before and after meals;
- ✓ use a disposable placemat to create a physical barrier between the allergic child's lunch and the table on which it will be eaten;
- ✓ be sensitive to the allergic child's need to feel included.

Lunch and Snack Ideas when there is Peanut/Nut Allergy

Always check ingredient lists for the potential presence of allergens.

Grain Products

- breads
- bagels
- rolls/buns
- muffins
- English muffins
- pita bread
- crackers
- melba toast
- rice

* Avoid bakery products, including homemade products, that do not have an ingredient list.

Vegetables & Fruit

- applesauce
- fresh fruit, fruit salads
- canned fruit in juice
- fruit juices
- vegetable or tomato juice
- raw vegetable pieces
- vegetable-based salads, e.g. tossed salad, coleslaw, potato salad
- leftover cooked vegetables
- vegetable-based soups, e.g. tomato, broccoli

Milk Products

- 2%, 1% or skim milk (white or chocolate)
- yogurt
- cheese
- cheese slices
- cheese strings
- cream soup
- cottage cheese
- milk pudding

Meat & Alternatives

- hard-cooked egg
- leftover meat loaf
- leftover chicken leg
- cold meats, e.g. roast beef, ham, turkey, salami, pastrami
- water-packed tuna or salmon
- beans or lentils

Combination Foods

- beef stew
- chili
- soups, e.g. chicken noodle, minestrone
- macaroni and cheese
- pizza
- pasta and sauce
- vegetables with yogurt dip
- sub/sandwich, e.g. meat and cheese sub, chicken salad on light rye bread

* Avoid baked goods that do not have an ingredient list

Snacks

- yogurt
- milk
- fresh fruit
- cheese and crackers
- unsweetened cereal
- raw vegetables with yogurt dip
- half bagel with cream cheese
- plain popcorn
- mini pita stuffed with tuna salad
- yogurt mixed with fruit
- milk pudding
- canned fruit packed in juice
- cheese-stuffed celery sticks
- muffins
- juice
- hard-cooked egg
- slice of meat
- half salami sandwich

Notice to parents and guardians:

This information does not replace any advice given by a physician and does not provide all of the necessary information to manage peanut/nut allergies in group settings. Parents and caregivers need to work together to develop a plan for preventing and treating reactions while the allergic child is in the group setting.

