

Nut avoidance advice

Information for patients

This leaflet provides information to patients and parents on how to avoid all nuts, and provide some useful tips to help you continue your normal daily routine.

Introduction

There are many types of nuts and you or your child may be sensitive to one or more of them. 30% (1 in 3) of nut allergic people will react to more than one type of nut. We recommend that you **avoid all the nuts your doctor/dietician has advised** you to, which may be **all nuts** or **some groups of nuts**. We usually advice to avoid ALL NUTS when labelling is unclear or chances of cross contamination is high, including restaurants and parties, even after we have advised to introduce one more 'safe' nuts at home

Avoiding all nuts includes all tree nuts e.g. **hazelnuts, cashews, pistachio, macadamias, walnuts & pecans**, as well as **peanuts**, which are legumes.

Most children will have their nut allergy for life. However, about 20% (1 in 5) of peanut allergic children will grow out of their allergy compared with about 10% (1 in 10) with a tree nut allergy. It's important that your child attends follow-up appointments to check their allergy status.

Remember: Only re-introduce nuts into your diet with medical advice

Getting started

The key to managing a nut allergy is checking the ingredients list **every time** you make a purchase. Food product formulations and manufacturing processes can - and do - change regularly. When starting a nut free diet, check all the foods in your cupboards, fridge and freezer.

Allergy statements/boxes: Many food labels have an allergy advice statement or allergy box. If there is no allergy statement, don't assume the product is safe - **always check the ingredients list.**

For more information on allergy labelling, go to NHS Choices:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/food-allergy/Pages/living-with.aspx>

What to look for:

- General: nuts, chipped nuts, flaked nuts, nut butters, nut paste, nut flavours, nut extracts, nut oil, satay sauce, praline, nougat
- Peanuts: peanuts, ground nuts, monkey nuts, earth nuts, *Arachis hypogaea*, arachis oil, groundnut oil, peanut oil, peanut butter, peanut flour
- Almonds: marzipan, frangipane, almond essence
- Hazelnuts: praline
- Other nuts: cashew, pistachio, walnuts, brazils, cobnuts, macadamia, pecans

Food labelling

It's not just in food...

- Avoid medicines and beauty products that contain nut oil
- Some animal and bird foods contain peanut products so your child should avoid handling these
- Cosmetics and pharmaceutical products are required by EU law to list any nut ingredients using the Latin name (see table below).

Peanut/Peanut Oil	<i>Arachis Hypogaea</i>
Bitter/sweet Almond	<i>Prunus Amara/Dulcis</i>
Cashew	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>
Sesame	<i>Sesamum Indicum</i>
Walnut	<i>Juglans Regia</i> or <i>Juglans Nigra</i>
Brazil	<i>Bertholetia Excelsa</i>
Hazelnut	<i>Corylus Rostrata</i>
Macadamia	<i>Macadamia ternifolia</i>
Pecan	<i>Carya illinoensis</i>
Pistachio	<i>Pistacia vera</i>

Other ways to reduce risk:

- Take care preparing, cooking and storing foods, in order to minimise the risk of cross contamination.
- The safest approach is to have no nuts at home but we sometimes advise a child to introduce nuts even if another child in the household has a nut allergy.
- Teach your child about their nut allergy, how to identify nuts and when to refuse foods that may not be safe.
- Make sure your emergency plan and medication is always up to date

“May contain...” or “Made in a factory...” labelling

These warnings are used by food manufacturers to highlight a risk of a product being accidentally contaminated by nuts during manufacturing. There is no law to say how or when this should be used but it appears on a wide variety of products.

It is important to consider the following points:

- **Recipes and manufacturing processes can change.** Just because a food with a nut warning has been eaten safely in the past, this does not mean that it will always be safe; it may contain nut traces next time. - **All nut warnings should be treated with the same level of risk** regardless of the wording used. - **You can be more sensitive to nut protein if unwell**, or if you've been doing strenuous exercise. This makes having a nut trace more risky. - **Chocolate and chocolate covered items pose a higher risk of nut contamination** because chocolate that has dripped off one product may be used on another.

There are no set guidelines for what to do but, **the safest approach is to avoid all foods with “may contain” nut warnings.** However, avoiding all foods that carry these warnings can be quite restrictive and some people choose to ignore them. There is always a risk associated with doing this particularly when there are similar products within a food range where one contains nuts (e.g. breakfast cereals, cakes, biscuits, chocolates). Chocolate covered items pose a higher risk of cross-contamination because chocolate dripping off one product may be used on another.

However, if a food with a nut warning is to be eaten remember:

- Always have in-date emergency medication to hand

- Be within easy reach of a phone
- Only eat if someone is with you who can help if a reaction occurs
- Avoid if in a remote location, if unwell, if asthma is not well controlled or if you have had a previous anaphylactic reaction to nut traces or “may contain” products.

On the other hand, products such as orange squash or a can of soup are likely to have a lower risk of cross contamination. If in doubt, we recommend that you contact the manufacturer to ask them to explain the level of risk that their “may contain” warning refers to.

Discuss your approach to managing “may contain nut” products with your Dietician or allergy team as they can give you specific advice.

Cross Contamination

Cross contamination is a risk for people with a nut allergy. It occurs when a food that is nut-free comes into contact with nut protein (e.g. during storage, manufacturing processes or from a work surface or cooking utensils). If a food that has been contaminated with nut protein is eaten, it can cause an allergic reaction even if it is only trace amounts. Skin contact with a contaminated item may cause a local skin irritation but will not cause an anaphylactic reaction.

Examples of Cross Contamination

Using the same spoon to serve nut containing and nut-free dishes, or using the same cooking pan or oil previously used to cook a nut-based meal.

Taking the nuts off an ice cream or marzipan off a fruit cake and eating the rest. This will still leave traces of nut on the food.

Eating the raisins from a packet of nuts and raisins.

Kissing or holding hands with someone who has eaten nuts.

Food touching on a BBQ (e.g. satay chicken next to a plain burger)

Tips to Reduce Cross Contamination

Take extra care with hand washing and cleaning of food preparation areas and equipment. Wipe down surfaces with hot soapy water.

Always use clean dishes and cutlery. Never use the same knife in peanut butter, margarine and jam. Consider having a labelled container for the allergic child if other family members eat nuts.

If you have been eating nuts, avoid kissing or touching the person with nut allergy until you have thoroughly cleaned your hands, face and mouth.

Consider making your home a nut-free zone or having an agreed place in the kitchen where nuts are consumed.

Some key food groups

Nut free foods	Foods that may contain nuts (always check the label)
<p>Milk and dairy</p> <p>Cow/goat/sheep milk Soya/rice/coconut/oat milk Plain yogurt, fromage frais Fresh cream Plain cheese, plain cream cheese & cottage cheese</p>	<p>Ice cream, ice cream wafers Flavoured milk Cheesecake Cheese spread Speciality and unpackaged cheese</p>
<p>Meats and fish</p> <p>Fresh or frozen unprocessed meat or fish Plain tinned fish</p>	<p>Indian, Chinese, Thai, Indone- sian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, African dishes Processed meat and fish dishes such as pate, sausages, burgers, breaded chicken, meat pies, meat or fish in sauces</p>
<p>Breakfast cereals</p> <p>Plain breakfast cereals without nut warnings such as Weetabix, cornflakes, porridge oats, shredded wheat etc</p>	<p>Breakfast cereals such as muesli, granola or flavoured cereals</p>
<p>Breads, pastries, cakes and biscuits</p> <p>Plain breads and rolls (white, brown or wholemeal) Plain pitta or baguettes Cream crackers Plain cakes and biscuits</p>	<p>Naan bread, speciality bread Bread sticks, rice cakes, crackers Cereal/ muesli bars Fruit cakes, sponge cakes, pies, gateaux, cookies and biscuits</p>
<p>Fruit, vegetables and pasta</p> <p>Fresh, frozen, stewed, tinned or dried</p>	<p>Mixed salads, rice/pasta/noodle salads, coleslaw, fruit dishes Vegetarian dishes, eg veggie burgers, cutlets etc Pasta dishes with pesto sauce and nut fillings</p>

Nut free foods	Foods that may contain nuts (always check the label)
<p>Desserts, sweets & chocolate</p> <p>Jelly Milk puddings, custard, rice pudding, egg custard Boiled sweets Nut-free chocolate</p>	<p>Chocolate or toffee bars Asian, Greek, Turkish, Middle Eastern sweets, Instant desserts, trifle toppings, mousse, ice cream and ice lol- lies, meringues, Sponge puddings, crumbles and fruit pies</p>
<p>Snacks, soups, condiments and spreads</p> <p>Plain crisps, home -made soups, herbs , spices, salt and pepper, vinegar, soya sauce, marmite, bovril</p>	<p>Flavoured crisps and snacks, dried fruit, salad dressings/mayonnaise, dips, humous, stuffing mixes, oriental and Indian sauces, popcorn cooked in nut oil</p>
<p>Drinks</p>	<p>Instant chocolate drinks and milkshakes</p>
<p>Fats and oils</p> <p>Olive, rapeseed, corn, soya, sunflower, palm and vegetable oils, Butter, lard, margarine</p>	<p>Fried food, Indian or oriental dishes may contain nut oil, salad dressings that use unrefined nut oils such as walnut oil</p>

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

There is no clear evidence that eating or not eating nuts during pregnancy or breastfeeding has any effect on the chances of a child developing a nut allergy. If mothers would like to eat nuts or food containing nuts when pregnant or breastfeeding, they can do so as part of a healthy balanced diet.

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Frequently asked questions

What does 'may contain nuts' mean? This means that even though nuts aren't deliberately included, the manufacturer cannot guarantee that the product doesn't accidentally contain small amounts of them.

Can my child eat nutmeg or coconut? Nutmeg is not a nut and is safe to consume. Despite its name, coconut is safe to eat. Butternut squash, chestnuts, water chestnuts and palm nuts are also all ok.

Are shea nuts a problem? Shea nut butter is mostly used in moisturizers, toiletries and cosmetics but may be in food. It's best avoided.

What about refined peanut oil? Refined peanut oil has had the protein removed, which is the part of the nut that causes allergic reactions. It is highly unlikely to cause a reaction in the majority of peanut allergic people and if there is a reaction, it's likely to be mild.

Travelling abroad

- ✓ Speak to your airline well in advance if you are flying.
- ✓ On boarding, notify attendants.
- ✓ Consider taking your own snacks for the journey.
- ✓ Keep all emergency medication close to hand and check they are in date. Do not store auto-injectors in overhead lockers.
- ✓ Wherever you are staying, get the telephone number of the local hospital or emergency services and keep your medical insurance number handy.
- ✓ There are several websites that provide useful phrases about allergy in different languages. Check in advance how to describe your/your child's allergy in the local language:
- ✓ Ensure you or your child wears an allergy ID bracelet. You can find these from various websites; please see the list of useful websites at the end of this leaflet

Top tips for eating out

- ✓ Check out the restaurant's website as it may include **nutritional information** and **allergy alerts**
- ✓ Telephone the restaurant in advance to ask if they can cater for your child's allergy.
- ✓ On arrival, tell the staff about your/your child's allergy. Consider using a '**chef card**' (see www.dietarycard.co.uk) to confirm your order is nut-free.
- ✓ If in doubt, choose another restaurant.
- ✓ Keep to 'simple' menu choices as staff may not recall all ingredients in complex dishes. Check the description and ask about potentially 'hidden' nuts if in doubt.
- ✓ Be particularly cautious with Thai, Indonesian, Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern and African meals as these have a high risk of nut contamination.
- ✓ Self-service areas, buffets and salad bars are at risk of cross contamination and are best avoided.

Eating with friends

- ✓ **Let your host know** about your/your child's nut allergy in advance.
They may need some advice about nut-free dishes.
- ✓ At children's parties it may be helpful to **bring your own** nut-free foods. If you are not staying with your child, remember to explain how serious a reaction could be and how to deal with it.

Useful Contacts

- **www.allergyuk.org** A charity providing information about allergies

tel: 01322 619 898

- **www.anaphylaxis.org.uk** A charity providing information and support for people with severe allergies, including information about adrenaline auto-injectors

tel: 01252 542 029

- **www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy** NHS choices allergy and intolerance advice

- **www.bda.uk.com** The British Dietetic Association provides fact sheets on allergy and related topics

tel: 0121 200 8080

- **www.bsaci.org** The British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology provides information about allergies

- **www.peanutallergy.co.uk** Peanut Allergy UK is an online forum for people with peanut allergy

Useful websites

- **www.nutmums.com**
- **www.yellowcross.co.uk**
- **www.kidsaware.co.uk**
- **www.medicalert.co.uk**
- **www.allergyfreepassport.com**
- **www.allergyaction.org**
- **www.foodfreefrom.co.uk**
- **www.specialdietsconsulting.co.uk**

Who should I contact if I have a problem or question?

Contact the Paediatric Allergy team on **01895279721** OR
email **thh-tr.PaedAllergy@nhs.net**

What should I do in case of an emergency?

Seek medical advice immediately or call an ambulance

Languages/ Alternative Formats

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format.

Please contact: 01895 279973

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Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie
audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem informacji pacjenta (patient
information) pod numerem telefonu: 01895 279973.

如果你需要這些資料的其他語言版本、大字体、或音頻格式，請致電01895 279 973 查詢。

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، بالأحرف الكبيرة أو بشكل شريط صوتي، يرجى
الاتصال بالرقم التالي 01895279973 .