

Peanut-free Diet

Why this Diet is Important

This eating plan is for people who have a peanut allergy. A peanut allergy occurs when antibodies against peanut allergens are produced by the immune system. The combination of the allergen and the antibody produces a series of biochemical reactions. These reactions cause inflammation in the body. Symptoms may occur within minutes or up to 72 hours after eating foods containing peanuts.

People should not self diagnose food allergies. All food allergies should be diagnosed with the help of a medical practitioner. People with allergies should become familiar with the common symptoms of their allergy. They should know how to deal with rare but serious anaphylactic reactions. A dietitian can help ensure that the diet remains healthy while avoiding allergen-containing foods.

It was once thought that peanut allergies were lifelong. However, recent studies show that some children may outgrow their peanut allergy. This possibility should be discussed with your child's physician. Peanuts should **not** be reintroduced to a person who has been previously diagnosed with a peanut allergy unless there is medical supervision.

The Relationship of Peanut to Nut Allergy

Peanuts are legumes and are botanically related to other legumes such as soy, lentils, fresh and dried peas and beans, licorice and carob. However, most people who have a peanut allergy do not show signs of an adverse reaction to other legumes. Only peanuts need to be avoided.

Peanuts are unrelated botanically to nuts that grow on trees. Most people with a peanut allergy are able to eat a variety of tree nuts, such as walnuts, pecans, Brazil nuts, almonds, cashew nuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, etc. without difficulty. However, because tree nuts are also highly allergenic foods, they are also frequent causes of strong allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.

As peanuts and tree nuts are often small and brown, it may be difficult to distinguish peanuts from tree nuts. Also, foods with tree nuts may contain or be contaminated by peanuts. As an example, nut mixtures frequently contain peanuts, or come into

contact with peanuts. Therefore, people with a peanut allergy should avoid all nuts. This recommendation is especially important for peanut-allergic children.

However, there is no reason that legumes other than peanuts need to be avoided if a person is either peanut or tree-nut allergic.

What are the Symptoms of a Peanut Allergy?

An allergic reaction to peanuts will be the same as any food allergy, and may include any of the following reactions:

- flushing or reddening, especially of the face
- hives or a rash, increase in eczema symptoms
- itchy skin
- swelling of the face, lips, throat and tongue
- trouble breathing, wheezing
- difficulty in speaking or swallowing
- stomach pain, diarrhea, vomiting
- drop in blood pressure, rapid heart beat
- anxiety, distress, faintness, paleness, sense of doom, weakness
- loss of consciousness (in extreme cases).

A severe allergic reaction is rare, but it can happen. It may involve difficulty breathing, speaking or swallowing; a drop in blood pressure; rapid heartbeat and loss of consciousness. These symptoms indicate an anaphylactic reaction which requires immediate medical attention. Peanuts are one of the most frequently cited causes of life threatening anaphylactic reactions. If a person has been diagnosed as anaphylactic to peanuts, extreme caution must be exercised in avoiding all sources of peanut.

What Will Happen if I Eat a Small Amount of Peanut or Products Containing Peanut?

A totally peanut-free diet is necessary at first if there is a known or suspected allergy to peanut. It must be followed indefinitely if a person has been diagnosed as anaphylactic to peanuts. All products containing peanut or components of peanut must be avoided.

An allergic reaction does not depend on the quantity of the allergenic food eaten. Each person reacts at his or her own level, which typically differs between individuals. If peanut is eaten, the symptoms of allergy will persist only as long as the chemicals released in the immune response are present in the body. Symptoms will recur when peanut protein is again eaten.

Although it is not necessary for peanut-allergic people to avoid other nuts, a person who has experienced an anaphylactic (life threatening) reaction to peanuts is advised to avoid all nuts in the interest of safety.

What About Feeding a Baby Who Has a Peanut Allergy?

Proteins from peanuts in the mother's diet can pass into her breastmilk and cause allergy symptoms in the peanut-allergic baby.

If the breastfed infant is allergic to peanut protein, the elimination of all peanut and peanut-containing products from the mother's diet is necessary. If peanut elimination only partially eases the infant's distress, a detailed record of the mother's food intake, together with a symptom record for the baby, may indicate other possible dietary or medication irritants.

Label Reading Guidelines for a Peanut-Free Diet

Health Canada regulations require "peanut" to appear on the ingredient label if any peanut or peanut derivative is included in a manufactured food. Any food that has "peanut" in its name should be avoided. However, not all manufacturers are following these guidelines at the present time. The following lists include terms that indicate that a product may contain peanut.

Note: Be careful with imported products. Ingredients lists for imported products are not always accurate. Errors can occur as a result of incomplete translation or as a result of printing errors. Buying products manufactured in Canada is preferred because of our labelling requirements and monitoring systems. Direct access to the manufacturer is available should additional information be needed. Buying U.S. products also allows easier access to allergen specific information as compared to purchasing products manufactured overseas.

Terms that Indicate the Presence of Peanut

Anchics	Goober nuts	Nut meats
Arachide	Goober peas	Nu-nuts™ flavored nuts
Arachis oil	Ground nuts	Peanut butter
Artificial nuts	Hydrolysed peanut protein	Peanut flour
Beer nuts	Mandalona nuts	Peanut oil
Cacahouète/Cacahouette /Cacahuète	Mandelona nuts	Peanut protein
Cold-pressed peanut oil	Mixed nuts	Pindars
	Monkey nut	Valencia peanut

Potential Food Sources of Peanut

Almond paste	Desserts	HVP*	Salad dressings
Breakfast cereals	Dried soup mixes	Ice cream with nuts	Satay sauces
Baked goods	Egg rolls	Nut substitutes	Snack foods
Candies	Ethnic dishes	Marzipan (almond paste)	Soup mixes
Chocolate bars	Gravies	Peanut oil	Thai dishes
Chocolate ice cream	Hydrogenated vegetable oil	Prepared and frozen desserts	Vegetable oil
Chili	HPP*	Prepared soups	Vegetable shortening
Cookies			Vegetarian meat substitutes

* There is a slight chance that peanut protein may be included in the manufacture of hydrolyzed plant protein (HPP) and hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP). HVP and HPP are usually soy proteins. Hydrolysis of the protein makes it unlikely to cause an allergic reaction. However, if person is anaphylactic to peanuts, it is best to avoid HVP and HPP.

Accidental Sources of Peanuts and Nuts

There are a number of ways that foods may become contaminated with peanuts. Because peanut is one of the most likely allergens to trigger an anaphylactic reaction, peanut-allergic individuals and caretakers of peanut-allergic children must take particular care in identifying these potential sources and to avoid them.

As peanuts are usually considered to be nuts, they are often included in nut mixtures. There is often cross-contamination with peanuts in bulk nut bins.

Utensils used to handle peanuts are often used with other nuts without prior cleaning. Candies, confectionaries, desserts and ice creams containing nuts may also contain peanuts. Therefore, if a person is highly allergic to peanuts, it is best to avoid any food containing nuts in the interest of safety.

Sometimes contamination occurs in processing plants. The same oil may be used for roasting nuts, peanuts and sometimes edible seeds. Packaging of different products may be handled at the same site on the same packaging equipment.

Peanut Oil

Pure peanut oil is virtually free from peanut protein, and usually will not cause an allergic reaction. However, the oil may become contaminated with peanut protein during manufacturing. Peanut-allergic persons, especially those who have experienced an anaphylactic reaction, are advised to avoid peanut oil.

Peanut-free Diet

This diet provides a variety of foods in all food groups. All nutrient needs can be easily met. Remember to check labels carefully.

<i>Type of Food</i>	<i>Foods Allowed</i>	<i>Foods Restricted</i>
Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any breads, buns, or baked goods that are known to be free from peanut and peanut oil Dried pasta Homemade granola without peanut Plain cooked grains Plain oatmeal Ready-to-eat cereals without added oil or nuts Regular Cream of Wheat® 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked goods made with undisclosed sources of "nuts", oil, or shortening Baking mixes Commercial or homemade baked goods made with peanut oil or peanuts Ready-to-eat cereals with added oils and nuts, such as granola
Milk and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cream Dips made with allowed ingredients Ice cream made with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheese foods (e.g. slices, dips, spreads, cheese balls) containing nuts or undisclosed ingredients

<i>Type of Food</i>	<i>Foods Allowed</i>	<i>Foods Restricted</i>
	<p>allowed ingredients*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Plain cheese • Plain yogurt • Quark • Sour cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice cream flavoured with any nut or chocolate, and other milk-based confectionaries unless labeled "peanut-free" • Milk-based desserts and confectionaries (e.g. ice cream) containing peanuts or nuts
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pure vegetables and their juices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salads with dressings containing unknown oil or nuts • Vegetable canned in undisclosed oils • Vegetable dishes with sauces containing peanuts, peanut oil or unknown nuts or oils
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pure fruit and fruit juices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit dishes containing peanuts or nuts • Fruit dishes made with oil or shortening of unknown origin
Meat, Poultry and Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pure fresh or frozen meat, poultry or fish • Fished canned in broth, water or non-peanut oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese dishes • Commercial chili • Egg rolls • Fish canned in undisclosed oils • Meat, poultry or fish dishes made with peanut or undisclosed nuts or oils • Peanut protein • Thai dishes • Vegetarian burgers and

<i>Type of Food</i>	<i>Foods Allowed</i>	<i>Foods Restricted</i>
		other meat substitutes, unless labeled "peanut free"
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All without restricted ingredients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egg dishes prepared with oils or nuts of unknown sources Egg rolls
Legumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All pure legumes except peanut Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peanut and peanut products including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> artificial nuts goober nuts goober peas hydrolyzed peanut protein mandalona nuts mixed nuts peanut butter peanut flour peanut oil peanut protein Legume dishes containing peanut or oils or nuts of undisclosed source
Nuts and Seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All packaged plain, pure nuts and seeds All pure nut and seed oils and their butters, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> almond butter cashew butter sesame tahini 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial nuts Goober nuts Goober peas Mandalona nuts Mixed nuts Nuts from bulk bins, even when labeled "peanut-free" Nuts or oils of undisclosed origin

<i>Type of Food</i>	<i>Foods Allowed</i>	<i>Foods Restricted</i>
Fats and Oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter • Cream • Gravy made with meat drippings • Lard • Meat drippings • Pure vegetable, nut, or seed oil with source specified (except peanut) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margarine, unless source of oils is revealed and is peanut-free • Peanut oil • Salad dressings that list "oil" without revealing source
Spices and Herbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pure herbs and spices • Blend of herbs and spices, without added oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasoning packets with undisclosed ingredients • Vegetables such as garlic or sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil, unless source of oil is disclosed and is peanut free
Sweet and Sweeteners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial sweeteners • Corn syrup • Homemade cookies and candies with allowed ingredients • Molasses, maple syrup • Plain sugar, honey • Pure chocolate • Pure cocoa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any confectionery containing nuts unless specified to be peanut-free. • Chocolates with unknown ingredients • Chocolate bars • Cookies and candies • Marzipan (almond paste) • "Rework chocolate" (in European imported chocolates)

<i>Type of Food</i>	<i>Foods Allowed</i>	<i>Foods Restricted</i>
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All carbonated beverages are allowed. Fruit juices Tea, herbal tea, coffee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggnog, milkshakes, Tiger's milk and some malted and chocolate drinks may contain oils of undisclosed origin. Avoid these beverages unless the source is known not to be peanut.

*Although the product may be labeled "peanut-free", or may not be a known source of peanut, cross-contamination with serving utensils may make the product unsafe for people who are anaphylactic to peanuts, and should be avoided.

Additional Tips

Soup

Prepared soups, especially dried packaged soup mixes, may contain restricted products. To be safe, make your own meat, poultry or vegetable soup stocks. Meat drippings can be chilled, the fat lifted off, and the meat juices used for a soup base.

Desserts and Breads

All homemade desserts, cookies, cakes, muffins, candy made with allowed ingredients are acceptable. However, extreme caution is urged with commercially baked, restaurant-prepared items, or items made by friends and relatives who do not understand how serious a peanut allergy can be. It is simply not worth the risk to accept products of unknown origin or cooking methods (contaminated utensils).

Check labels on fat-free baked goods and desserts. If they do not contain "nuts" or "chocolate", then they are likely to be safe.

In many fat-free foods, the fat or oil is replaced with Simplese® which is made of components of milk and egg, and is peanut-free.

Expensive ice cream uses cream as the fat source, but cheaper brands usually contain vegetable oils. Read labels carefully. Any flavour of ice cream may be contaminated by peanut during its manufacture unless the product is made in a

dedicated peanut-free facility. People who are anaphylactic to peanuts should avoid commercial ice creams of all types. Home-made ice cream without peanuts, nuts or oil would be safe. Ice cream cones and cups of any flavour served from an ice cream bar or in a restaurant should be avoided because of the risk of cross-contamination from serving utensils, especially for people who are anaphylactic to peanuts.

Fruit ice pops and ices are good choices.

Condiments and Snacks

All labels should be checked. Ingredients can change. Acceptable condiments include:

- homemade salad dressings and sauces without peanuts or peanut oil
- ketchup
- mustard
- pickles
- pure baking chocolate and cocoa
- relish
- salt and pepper
- soy sauce
- Tabasco®
- vinegar.

Acceptable snacks include:

- air popped popcorn
- potato chips if the source of oil for frying is specified and is allowed
- tortilla chips made without peanut oil, and salsa.

Restaurants

Standard and international restaurants should provide a variety of foods. Tips for dining out include:

- It is recommended that people with severe peanut allergy call a restaurant between meal hours and discuss the allergy with the chef. Most chefs will be able to provide appropriate information, and some will recommend suitable peanut-free menu items. At busy times, the chef will not be able to provide this service, and most servers lack the critical information needed.
- Peanut oil is used by many Chinese and Thai restaurants, so such restaurants are unlikely to be a good choice.

- Most good Italian restaurants rely mainly on olive oil, but this should be checked with the chef. Also check which nuts and oils are used in menu items and desserts.
- Grilled or roasted meat, fish or poultry are best choices. It is essential to check the sources of oils used for brushing grills and in marinades.
- Meat fondues have traditionally been cooked in peanut oil because of its high smoking point. The source of the oil should be checked.
- Peanut oil is a relatively expensive oil, and is unlikely to be the oil of choice for moderately- to low-priced restaurants.
- For raw, undressed salad bar items, the possibility of cross contamination is low, but a safer choice would be a salad ordered from the menu, with a suitable dressing on the side.
- Baked potatoes are safe, but fries may be cooked in peanut or peanut contaminated oil.
- Fruit ices, fresh fruit or a cheese tray can be good choices if nut and peanut free.
- Major fast food restaurants will provide brochures with ingredient listings on request. Sources of oils should be checked, and any dessert items containing “nuts” should be avoided.

Shopping

- Label reading and extreme caution is absolutely necessary.
- If a manufactured product does not have a label, avoid it.
- For information about questionable products, contact the manufacturer. It is important to find out whether or not they ever change the source of oil, and/or nuts used in a product.
- There is often cross-contamination with peanuts in bulk nut bins. Utensils used to handle peanuts are often used with other nuts without prior cleaning. It is advisable to buy plain nuts packaged by the manufacturer.
- Candies, confectionaries, desserts and ice cream containing “nuts” may also contain peanuts and should be avoided.

Recipes

Easy Vegetable Stock

Use any combination of washed and trimmed: onion skins, potato and carrot peelings, celery strings and leaves, parsley stems, green bean and tomato ends, outer lettuce leaves. Save trimmings in a plastic bag in the fridge or freezer.

Cover with water in a saucepan. Add a bay leaf and pepper and bring to a boil. Simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and add salt to taste. Use instead of consommé or soup base. Freeze leftovers in ice cube trays.

Instant sorbet

In a food processor, blend:

1	banana	1
Dash	lemon juice	Dash
250 – 375 mL	frozen berries	1 – 1 ½ cups

Sugar or artificial sweetener to taste.



Notes

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