

Nurses Corner:

May is Food Allergy Awareness Month!

Read below to explore 10 helpful and potentially life-saving facts and to learn about the signs of anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction.

## 10 FAACTs *about* Food Allergies

- 1 Food allergies affect **as many as 32 million** Americans, including 6 million children. Studies report that **1 in 13** children and up to **1 in 10** adults in the United States have a food allergy. For children, this averages to **two** children per classroom.
- 2 A food allergy is an **immune system response** to a food that the body mistakenly believes is harmful.
- 3 Eight foods account for 90% of all food allergy reactions: **Peanuts, Tree nuts, Milk, Egg, Wheat, Soy, Fish, & Shellfish**. However, almost any food can cause a reaction.
- 4 There is **no cure** for food allergies and **strict avoidance** is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction.  
**Trace amounts** of an allergen can trigger an allergic reaction in some individuals. Past reactions to a food allergy **do not predict future reactions!** Someone can still have a life-threatening reaction to a food they are allergic to, even if they have never had a serious reaction before.
- 5 Symptoms can **develop rapidly** after exposure to an allergen, often within minutes and usually within 30 minutes. However, it can take up to 2 hours for symptoms to occur after exposure to a food allergen.
- 6 Anaphylaxis is a **serious allergic reaction** that comes on quickly and has the potential to become life-threatening. Anaphylaxis requires immediate medical treatment, including an injection of epinephrine and a visit to the emergency room.
- 7 It is important to be deliberate and not hesitate when you have to use epinephrine. The device is **potentially life-saving**. A call to 9-1-1 and a trip to the emergency room should always follow epinephrine administration.
- 8 Individuals at risk should carry **two epinephrine auto-injectable devices** with them at all times AND an **Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Action Plan** signed by a board-certified allergist.
- 9 **Food allergies continue to rise** and are a safety and public health concern across the United States. You can get free resources and find out how to help keep those with food allergies safe at:

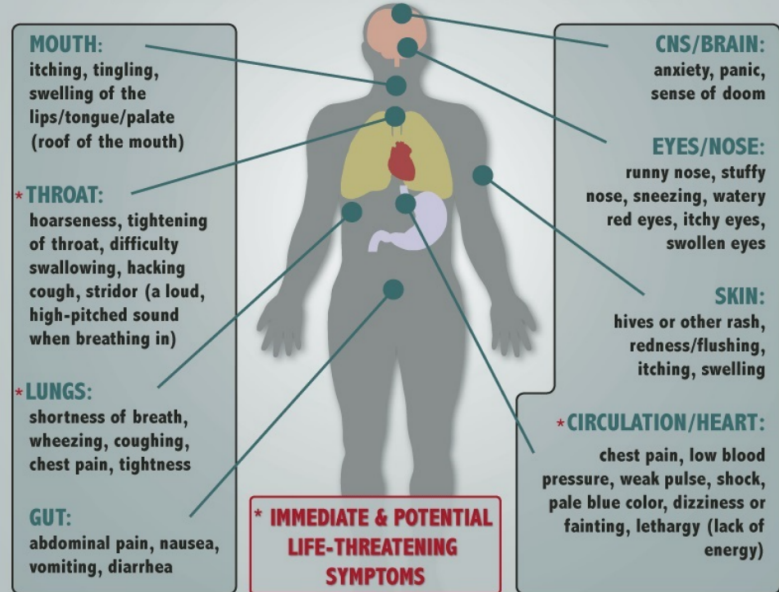
[www.FoodAllergyAwareness.org](http://www.FoodAllergyAwareness.org)



### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ANAPHYLAXIS

Anaphylaxis (an-a-fi-LAK-sis) is a serious allergic reaction that comes on quickly and has the potential to become life-threatening. The most common anaphylactic reactions are to foods, venom, medications, and latex.

Anaphylaxis signs and symptoms that may occur alone (\*) or in any combination after exposure to an allergen include:



Consult with a board-certified allergist for an accurate diagnosis and management plan.

• Although the majority of individuals experiencing anaphylaxis have skin symptoms, some of the most severe cases have no rash, hives, swelling

• **EPINEPHRINE** is the first-line of treatment for anaphylaxis

• Antihistamines, inhalers, & other treatments should only be used as **secondary treatment**

• **ALWAYS CARRY TWO (2) epinephrine auto-injectors at all times**

• When you, or someone you know, begin to experience symptoms, **CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY!**

**FAACT**  
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