



## FOOD SAFETY

## How to Protect People with Food Allergies

**World Allergy Week: 28 June – 4 July 2020**

### What is a Food Allergy?

A food allergy is an immune system response to a food protein that the body mistakenly believes is harmful. When the individual eats food containing that protein, the immune system releases massive amounts of chemicals, triggering symptoms that can affect a person's breathing, gastrointestinal tract, skin and/or heart.

Signs and symptoms of food allergy can be mild, moderate or severe.

An allergic reaction can include; hives, swelling of the lips, face and eyes, abdominal pain, vomiting, swelling of the tongue, swelling of the throat, breathing difficulty, persistent dizziness and/collapse. If left untreated, signs and symptoms related to breathing and heart/blood pressure can be fatal.

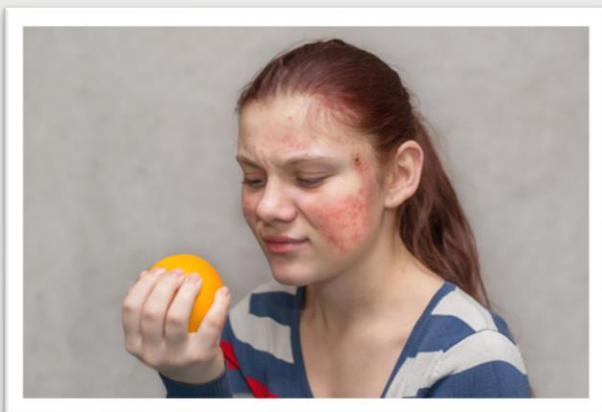


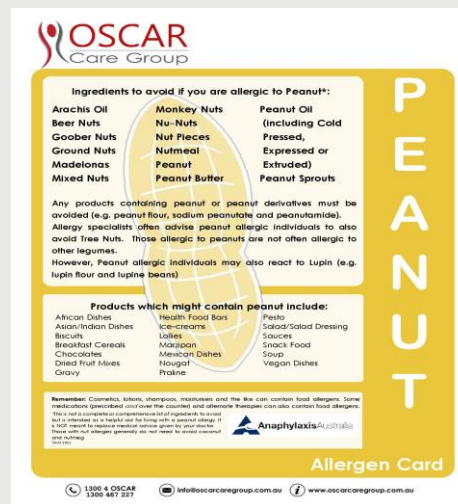
### What is anaphylaxis?

A severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis always involves the respiratory and/or the cardiovascular system. An allergic reaction usually occurs within 20 minutes to two hours of eating even a small amount of the food, and can rapidly become life threatening.

### What should you do when faced with a severe allergic reaction?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that needs urgent medical attention. An immediate triple zero call for an ambulance is usually warranted. The first line treatment is the use of adrenaline (epinephrine), which is administered via an autoinjector (such as an EpiPen®). Adrenaline autoinjectors are commonly prescribed by a doctor to those considered at risk of anaphylaxis or are otherwise available directly from a pharmacy.





## Triggers

The most common triggers, causing 90 percent of allergic reactions in Australians are egg, cow's milk, peanut, tree nuts (such as cashew and almond), sesame, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. Some lesser-known triggers also include kiwi fruit, banana, chicken, mustard and celery.

It is important to understand that in some people even very small amounts of food can cause a life-threatening allergic reaction/anaphylaxis.

## How to avoid a reaction

Avoidance of the food trigger is crucial. Individuals at risk and their carers must read food labels of every food they put to their mouth. If a product is not packaged, they must enquire about ingredients and the risk of cross-contamination of the food coming into contact with the food they are allergic to.

OSCAR Care Group's Allergen Cards can assist your kitchen staff in ensuring their recipes do not contain any of the allergens that children in your care are susceptible to.

### Do you have the new purple Chopping boards?

OSCAR Care Group recommends that you use Purple Chopping boards to help protect children in your care with Allergies by avoiding cross-contamination. These are specifically for use with 'free-from' ingredients such as gluten-free produce or Nut free ingredients.

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For further information, please contact OSCAR Care Group Food Safety Auditor and Trainer, Samantha King. Please call or email via our contact details below.

