

Myth: Food allergies aren't dangerous.

Fact: Food allergies are potentially life-threatening. Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that is rapid in onset, and can cause death.

Myth: It can take several days for the symptoms of an allergic reaction to appear.

Fact: Symptoms of allergic reactions typically occur within minutes to two hours after the individual has ingested the food to which he or she is allergic.

Myth: One little bite is okay.

Fact: In fact, less than one little bite can cause a severe reaction in some with a food allergy. Some individuals with food allergies have experienced reactions to trace amounts of the allergen in the food.

Myth: Peanuts are the only foods that can cause a severe reaction.

Fact: While it is true that peanuts can cause very serious reactions, other foods have been known to cause severe reactions as well. These include, but are not limited to, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, and milk.

Myth: A food can be made less allergenic by cooking it.

Fact: A food allergy is an immune system response to a protein in a food. The protein remains in the food during heating, therefore, you cannot make a food less allergenic by cooking it. The exception to this is sometimes seen with egg and milk allergy; some individuals with egg allergy are able to consume egg or milk that has been extensively heated and in smaller amounts, such as in baked goods. Ask your doctor before trying this. Also, many people with allergy to raw fruit/vegetable based upon having hay fever (pollen allergy) tolerate the heated forms.

Myth: A positive skin prick test to a specific food means that you will react to that food when you eat it.

Fact: A positive skin prick test can be highly predictive of a food allergy, however these tests can sometimes yield a "false positive" result. An oral food challenge is the most definitive test to determine whether you have a food allergy. Consult your allergist for advice.

Myth: Adults don't develop new food allergies.

Fact: Though most individuals develop food allergies in early childhood, food allergies can develop at any age.

Myth: Reactions will become increasingly severe each time you have one.

Fact: Reactions are unpredictable. When they occur, they can be the same, less severe than, or more severe than previous reactions. Additionally, an individual may not always experience the same symptoms of an allergic reaction (for example, an individual may have hives with one reaction, and vomiting with a subsequent reaction). The nature of a reaction depends on a person's level of allergy and the dose of the allergen that was ingested.

<http://www.foodallergy.org/page/myths?>