



## Is this product safe? Check it Out!

### Did you know that....

'Priority' or major allergens in Canada include: peanut, tree nut, soy, wheat, egg, milk, shellfish, fish, sesame, and sulphite. Alternate names exist for some of them, e.g. casein or whey (milk), albumen (egg).

Precautionary labels, such as 'may contain' are put on by manufacturers at their own discretion. The absence of an allergen from an ingredient list and the 'may contain' warning does not necessarily mean that a product is safe.

While foods sold in Canada are required to meet Canadian labelling regulations, there have been problems with some imported goods, e.g. European chocolates with undeclared peanut/tree nuts. Note that food labelling regulations differ from country to country.

Peanut is a member of the legume family. Tree nuts include almonds, pistachios, walnuts, etc. Many companies which process and/or package peanuts also process/package tree nuts, therefore, there could be a risk of cross-contact.

Many individuals with a peanut allergy are also allergic to tree nuts.

Most food-induced anaphylactic reactions occur within 2 hours of ingestion.

Many child-friendly groups (e.g. schools, daycare centers, programs, camps) have 'safe snack' lists, which have been compiled by staff or parents. Be aware that these lists become outdated and the criteria for selecting 'safe' products may not be the same as yours.

Goods labeled as vegan, dairy-free, or Parve could potentially have enough milk protein in the product to cause a reaction. 'Milk-free' products could contain whey or lactose.

### What to do?

- ↪ Purchase allergen cards from Anaphylaxis Canada. Familiarize yourself with alternate names.  
Read labels carefully when purchasing a product. Double check labels at home to make sure you have not missed anything.
- ↪ Check with the manufacturer about its allergen policy and risk for cross-contact. Stick to manufacturers, which list allergens, regardless of the source.
- ↪ Be particularly cautious with foods with 'imported by' or 'imported for' on the label. Contact the manufacturer or distributor to find out about the manufacturer's allergen policies.  
Make sure that the call taker knows that you are inquiring about a product made or purchased in Canada.
- ↪ Check out products even if there is a 'peanut-free' or 'nut free' claim.  
Check out products with other 'allergen-free' claims if you are sensitive to that allergen (e.g. milk or egg).
- ↪ Consult with an allergist if you are concerned.
- ↪ Use good judgment when introducing or trying new foods in certain situations. For example, don't give your allergic child a new product to eat at school, camp, or in a remote area (e.g. camping trip or cottage). Try new foods earlier in the day.
- ↪ Check out products yourself and keep a record of product information, using the checklist on the other side of this page.
- ↪ Check with the manufacturer to determine if the product would be suitable. Consult with your allergist as well if you have questions.



### TIPS

- ✓ If you cannot get a satisfactory answer from a consumer representative, ask to speak with a corporate specialist in allergens or a trained specialist at the manufacturing location. Provide your name, phone number, and specific product details if you have to leave a message.
- ✓ Photocopy the checklist. Keep the completed forms in a 3-ring binder.
- ✓ Have the package with you when contacting the company. Make sure that you are talking about the same product.
- ✓ Thank companies with good allergen policies and reward them with your business. Tell your friends and family members about their products.
- ✓ Sign up for product alerts [www.anaphylaxis.ca](http://www.anaphylaxis.ca).

### What to do if you have a reaction?

Follow the emergency plan outlined by your allergist. After you or your child are well again, there are several steps you should take:

If a known allergen is not declared on the label, contact the manufacturer to inquire about the likelihood of cross-contact. Keep a log of inquiries made – date and time of call, name of company rep, and explanation given.

Contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) if you suspect an undeclared allergen is in the product. To find the CFIA office in your area:

- Check your phone book.
- Call 1-800-442-2342 (Headquarters, Ottawa).
- Go to [www.inspection.gc.ca/english/directory/offbure.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/directory/offbure.shtml).

Keep a sample of the product and the original package. The sample can be tested and the lot/batch number on the package identifies a specific plant and production date and time. If an undeclared allergen is detected, a product recall may be issued.

Forward a copy of your final correspondence with the company and the CFIA to Anaphylaxis Canada – email [info@anaphylaxis.ca](mailto:info@anaphylaxis.ca) or fax (416) 785-0458, attention: Food & Product Labelling Committee.

Contact your allergist for follow up consultation. If likely causes have been ruled out, maybe a new allergy has developed.