

What are the most common food allergies?

- The "Big 9" account for 90% of allergic reactions: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans, and sesame.
- In the UK, the list of 14 regulated allergens is used.

2. What are the 14 regulated allergens in the UK?

- Celery, cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats), crustaceans (prawns, crabs, lobsters), eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs (mussels, oysters), mustard, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites, and tree nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios, macadamia nuts).

3. How are food allergies diagnosed?

- Allergy tests, including skin prick tests and blood tests, can help identify potential allergies.
- An allergist can interpret test results and recommend supervised food challenges to confirm a diagnosis.
- Cross-reactivity can occur, meaning a reaction to one food may mean a reaction to similar foods.

4. What are the symptoms of a food allergy?

- Symptoms can range from mild (hives, itching, skin rash) to severe (difficulty breathing, anaphylaxis).
- Common symptoms include skin reactions, gastrointestinal issues, and respiratory problems.

5. Can food allergies be outgrown?

- Some allergies, like milk, egg, wheat, and soy, may be outgrown, particularly in childhood.
- Peanut, tree nut, fish, and shellfish allergies are often lifelong.

6. What should I do if I think I have a food allergy?

- Consult with an allergist for proper diagnosis and management.
- Avoid the trigger foods and be prepared for accidental exposure by carrying an epinephrine auto-injector if prescribed.