



HeadStartNews

Food Allergies

Only about six to eight percent of children have a true food allergy. Food allergies are most evident in the first years of life and are often outgrown by adulthood. Most commonly, children are allergic to: cow's milk, egg whites, soy, peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, cashews and almonds), wheat and shellfish (shrimp).



A child who has a food allergy is often allergic to other inhaled substances such as dust, cat dander and pollen, or are more likely to develop such allergies later in life. Anyone can develop an allergy, but children of allergic parents are more likely to have allergies.

The first symptoms of a food allergy may be itching in the mouth or swelling of the lips or tongue. After the food is digested in the stomach, symptoms may include vomiting, stomach pain or diarrhea. Reactions may then result in hives or eczema, coughing, wheezing or trouble breathing. Reactions usually begin within a few minutes to an hour after eating the food. Although it's rare, a food allergy can lead to death. Allergies to tree nuts and peanuts are

the leading cause of fatal (or near fatal) allergic reactions in children.

Sometimes a reaction to food isn't an allergy, but food poisoning. Or a reaction to milk products can be lactose intolerance. Lactose intolerance is not a true food allergy.

To reduce or delay food allergies:

- Exclusively breast feed infants for at least six months.
- Avoid feeding infants solid foods until they are six months of age.
- Introduce solids one at a time, three to four days apart, in case a reaction occurs.
- Cow's milk, wheat, corn, citrus, nuts and soy should not be given to a child before the age of one.
- Wait until a child is two years old before introducing eggs and fish, and offer peanuts only after age three.

If you think your child has a food allergy, stop offering the suspected food and see your health care provider.

Breakfast Bars



Many breakfast bars are high in fat and sodium. Read labels on breakfast bars; some are just like candy bars.

What You Need:

- 2 cups all bran or granola cereal
- 1 cup diced apples
- 3/4 cup flour
- 3/4 cup applesauce
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup margarine, melted
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup honey (remember honey is not for children under the age of one)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 banana, mashed

How To Fix:

1. Combine all ingredients.
2. Spread into greased 11 x 7-inch baking dish. Bake 25 minutes at 350° F, until a toothpick comes out clean.
3. Cool and cut into squares. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Makes 12. (125 calories and 6 grams fat per bar)

Raw Beef Warning

Salmonella, E-coli, Listeria and Staphylococcus are harmful bacteria that can be present in any food of animal origin.

Harmful bacteria is more likely present in ground beef because more meat is exposed to bacteria when it is ground.



Do not eat raw or undercooked ground beef. To destroy bacteria, meat must be cooked to 160° F. Meat will be well done and no pink present at this temperature. This includes ground

beef used in casseroles, meatballs and meatloaf.

Harmful bacteria in ground beef can be killed in a microwave. But microwaves don't cook meat evenly, so hamburger must be covered and rotated halfway through cooking. Harmful bacteria is not killed by freezing, and it's not safe to partially cook ground beef for later use.

Symptoms of foodborne illness can be very serious. Children and senior citizens are most at risk.

Finger Games

Songs and finger plays are a fun way to improve a child's small motor, listening and language skills. Children are eager to learn and sing silly songs. Below are two songs. Find more songs and finger plays in books at a public library.

Clap, clap, clap your hands
As slowly as you can.
Clap, clap, clap your hands
As quickly as you can.

Change clap to shake, roll, rub or wiggle your fingers.

Right hand, left hand
This is my right hand,
I'll raise it up high. (right hand up)
This is my left hand,
I'll touch the sky. (left hand up)

Right hand, (show right palm)
Left hand, (show left palm)
Roll them around (roll hands over
and over)

Left hand (show palm)
Right hand (show palm)
Clap, clap, clap (clap hands)

Small Muscle Movements

Small-muscle movements involve smaller body parts, such as the fingers. Examples of small motor skills are using a spoon, holding a crayon and drawing. Small-muscle movements depend on eye-hand coordination. Hand movements must match what the eyes see.

- Around nine to 12 months, a baby masters picking up an object with his thumb and index finger. Cheerios and frozen peas placed on a high-chair tray let a child practice this small-muscle movement.
- Between the ages of two and three, children can use a spoon, put on and remove simple clothing and zip a large zipper.
- At three to four years of age, children learn to fasten and unfasten large buttons, use scissors, draw lines and circles, and eat food without assistance.
- Children between the ages of four and five use a fork, copy some letters and cut on a line with scissors.

All children develop motor skills at different rates—some slowly, others quickly. Consult your health care provider if your child is having difficulty with small-muscle movements.

The World of the Fetus

An unborn baby is called a fetus. Scientists have found that sounds echo through the amniotic fluid that surrounds the fetus. The fetus can hear music, the movement of mother's blood through the placenta, her heart beat and breathing. But a mother's voice is special to her baby after birth. Newborns can tell a mother's voice from anyone else's.



The unborn baby's eyelids unseal and begin to open and close during the sixth month. The fetus reacts to very bright light by becoming more active. Also during the sixth month, the fetus can taste bitter, sweet and sour flavors from fluids that cross the placenta. Scientists believe that an unborn baby becomes familiar with a mother's diet in the womb, so the breast milk flavor is familiar after birth.