

# ALL ABOUT EGG ALLERGY



An egg allergy is rare in adults and most often seen in children from 2 to 7 years of age. Studies show that most children tend to outgrow an egg allergy within a few years.<sup>1</sup> However, if the egg allergy is severe, it could last a lifetime. An egg allergy is caused by a protein in eggs which triggers an abnormal reaction to the immune system.

Eggs have two allergenic components: the yolk and the white. An allergic reaction can vary from mild to life-threatening, depending on the person and the amount of egg consumed.



## Egg allergy symptoms

Most allergic reactions to eggs involve the skin, for example: rash, eczema, and redness. However, each person reacts at his or her own level, which will differ from person to person.

Symptoms may occur within minutes or up to 72 hours after eating foods that contain egg and usually last a day or two. The severity of the reaction does not depend on the amount of egg eaten. Some people react to even small amounts of egg. People with allergies should become familiar with the common symptoms of their allergy.

A severe allergic reaction in which several different parts of the body are affected is called anaphylaxis. This can lead to loss of consciousness and death. Immediate medical help is necessary. Those at risk should carry epinephrine and wear a MedicAlert bracelet.

## Diagnosing and treating an egg allergy

A doctor, preferably an allergist who is a member of the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, is the best person to diagnose an allergy and assess its seriousness.

New scientific evidence now indicates that there is no need to delay or avoid the introduction of potentially allergenic foods beyond 6 months of age as a way to prevent food allergies.<sup>2</sup> If there is a family history of a food allergy, it's suggested that you speak to your health care provider for more information on the introduction of eggs into your baby's diet.

Currently there is no cure for an egg allergy. The only treatment is to avoid eggs including any foods or products containing eggs.

Be prepared. Carry injectable epinephrine with you at all times (e.g. EpiPen®, Twinject®) if prescribed and you know how to use it. Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room for follow-up.

## *Read labels carefully!*

In order to avoid foods containing eggs, it is important to read labels of packaged or prepared foods carefully. Avoid food and products that do not have an ingredient list. Any word containing *ovo* or *albumin* refers to a food which contains eggs.

## *Egg-free baking is possible*

When baking for someone with an egg allergy, you can use an egg substitute. For best results, use recipes calling for only 1 or 2 eggs.

Commercial egg substitutes, such as Kingsmill Foods Egg Replacer, Celimix Brand Egg Replacer and Ener-g Egg Replacer are available and can be ordered directly from the company. They can also be found in some health food stores or the natural food section of some grocery stores.



*For each egg in a recipe,  
substitute ONE of the following:*

- 5 mL (1 tsp) baking powder, 25 mL (1½ tbsp) water and 25 mL (1½ tbsp) oil
- 5 mL (1 tsp) baking powder, 15 mL (1 tbsp) water and 15 mL (1 tbsp) vinegar
- 5 mL (1 tsp) yeast dissolved in 50 mL (¼ cup) warm water
- 1 packet of unflavoured gelatin, 30 mL (2 tbsp) of warm water. Do not combine until ready to use
- ½ medium mashed banana.



*Allergic reactions to food can include any of the following symptoms:*

- Swelling (face, lips, throat and tongue)
- Tingling in the mouth
- Vomiting, diarrhea, nausea
- Abdominal pain (cramps)
- Rash, eczema, redness
- Change in skin color
- Hives, itching
- Runny nose, sneezing, wheezing
- Itchy, watery eyes
- Nasal congestion
- Breathing, swallowing difficulty
- Coughing, choking, gagging
- Drop in blood pressure, rapid heart beat
- Anxiety, distress, faintness, paleness, sense of doom, weakness
- Loss of consciousness  
(in extreme cases)



*Food ingredients that indicate or may indicate the presence of eggs*

## Avoid the following:

- Albumen/Albumin
- Meringue
- Conalbumin
- Duck, goose and quail eggs
- Egg (white, yolk, dried, powdered, solids, frozen and pasteurized)
- Eggnog
- Egg substitutes (egg beaters®)
- Globulin
- Lecithin
- Livetin
- Lysozyme
- Ovalbumin
- Ovoglobulin
- Ovolactohydrolyze proteins
- Ovomacroglobulin
- Ovomucoid
- Ovomucin
- Ovotransferrin
- Ovovitellin
- Simplesse
- Silico-albuminate
- Vitellin





## *Foods that contain or may contain eggs*

### Avoid the following:

- Alcoholic cocktails/drinks
- Baby food (some)
- Battered/fried foods
- Béarnaise sauce
- Breads and buns (can contain or be glazed with eggs)
- salad dressings (e.g. Caesar)
- Cakes
- Candies (cream centres in chocolates)
- Consommé soup
- Cookies
- Cream-filled pies
- Custards/puddings
- Dessert mixes (some)
- Doughnuts
- Dried egg solids
- Eggnog
- Egg noodles
- Egg protein
- Egg/Fat substitute
- French toast
- Frozen egg
- Hollandaise sauce
- Homemade root beer
- Hot dogs (some)
- Ice cream (some)
- Icings or frostings
- Lard and shortening
- Mayonnaise
- Meringue
- Newburg sauce
- Orange Julep®
- Pancakes
- Pasteurized egg
- Processed and deli meats
- Quiche
- Soup clarified with eggs
- Soup with noodles
- Soufflé
- Surimi
- Waffles
- Wine
- Won ton soup
- Meat mixtures (meatloaf, ham, burgers, meatballs, sausages...)

### References:

1. [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/securit/2012-allergen\\_egg-oeuf/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/securit/2012-allergen_egg-oeuf/index-eng.php)
2. Koplin, J.J., et al. Can early introduction of egg prevent egg allergy in infants? A population based study. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. 2010;126: 807-13.