



# Early Introduction of Allergenic Foods

## What are allergenic foods?

Allergenic foods are foods that have a higher risk of allergy. These include the following:

- Egg
- Milk
- Peanut
- Wheat
- Soy
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Sesame
- Tree nuts (e.g., almond, cashew, walnut, hazelnut, macadamia, pine nut)



Studies have shown that the early introduction of allergenic foods followed by regular consumption can help prevent food allergy.

## When is an ideal time to introduce allergenic foods?

Complementary solids can be started between 4 and 6 months of age when your baby is developmentally ready.

Introduce **egg and peanut** to your baby once he/she has started on solids, around the **age of 6 months**.

Introduction of other allergenic foods should not be deliberately delayed. They should be **introduced alongside** other initial weaning foods (e.g., fruits, vegetables, meats).



## How do I introduce the allergenic foods?

Allergenic foods should be introduced one at a time. Watch for any allergic reaction when introducing a new allergenic food for the first time. The new allergenic food can be given daily for the next two consecutive days to confirm if baby can tolerate the food. Following this, **give the food regularly** to maintain tolerance to the food.

Allergenic foods can be introduced in age-appropriate textures. The food can be made blended or mashed into a carbohydrate base (e.g., porridge or cereal). The following table shows examples of how the allergenic foods can be prepared.

Allergenic Food	Preparation Examples	To Note
<b>Egg</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard-boiled egg mashed or blended into porridge or cereal.</li> <li>• Egg cracked into porridge and then fully cooked.</li> <li>• Fried omelette cut into strips.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egg must be fully cooked.</li> <li>• A whole egg can be introduced at once. Alternatively, you can introduce egg yolk before egg white as egg yolk is less likely to trigger an allergic reaction as compared to egg white.</li> </ul>
<b>Milk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereals/baby foods that contain milk solids.</li> <li>• Sugar-free yogurt/yogurt melts</li> <li>• Standard cow's milk formula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh milk can only be introduced after 1 year of age.</li> </ul>
<b>Peanut</b> <b>Tree nuts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sugar and salt-free peanut butter mixed into cereals or spread on baby bites/biscuits or bread.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemade nut butters can be made by blending plain roasted nuts.</li> <li>• Do not offer baby the whole nut as it is a choking hazard.</li> </ul>
<b>Wheat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereals made from wheat.</li> <li>• Wheat containing noodles or pasta.</li> <li>• Bread</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some cereals and noodles are made from rice and do not contain wheat. Check the ingredient list on the packaging to verify that it contains wheat.</li> </ul>
<b>Soy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mashed tofu</li> <li>• Soy milk/soy pudding</li> </ul>	
<b>Fish</b> <b>Shellfish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steam or added directly in porridge to cook, then mash or blend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure fully cooked.</li> </ul>

## How do I know if my baby has a food allergy?

There are two types of allergic reactions – immediate and delayed.

### + Immediate

The mild immediate type is commonly seen and usually occurs **within 2 hours** of ingesting the food. The reactions include development of widespread redness, hives, eye and lip swelling, single episode of vomiting. Mild allergic reactions can be managed by a general practitioner or paediatrician.



*Bumpy urticaria on background of flushing signifying mild allergic reaction*

### + Severe immediate type allergic reaction,

also known as anaphylaxis, involves any one of the following:

- **Respiratory:** difficulty breathing, noisy breathing, voice hoarseness, tongue swelling, turning blue
- **Gut:** vomiting more than once, severe abdominal pain
- **Circulation:** turning pale, limp, drowsy or losing consciousness



**Call for an ambulance (995) if any of the above occurs.**

Minor redness around the mouth that improves spontaneously is most often due to skin irritation and is not an allergic reaction. Try putting some barrier creams (e.g., paraffin or moisturisers) prior to eating to protect the skin against local food irritation.

### + Delayed type allergic reactions are rare.

These typically occur more than 2 hours but within 48 hours of food ingestion. It may include persistent vomiting, diarrhea (watery, stools that can be mucoid or bloody), or a flare of pre-existing eczema.

Consistency is required for the diagnosis – the same reaction will occur with repeated ingestion of the food. See a paediatric allergist who can evaluate your baby further.



## What should I do if I suspect that my baby has a food allergy?

If you suspect that your baby has a food allergy, avoid the food in the meantime and see a paediatric allergist who can evaluate your baby further. Keeping a food diary and pictures of the reaction will be helpful when seeing the doctor.





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