

Tree Nut Allergy

In addition to the general information about food allergies, here are some issues that people with a tree nut allergy should know about.

Nuts of concern for a tree nut allergy

Some tree nuts are considered to be priority allergens in Canada. These are almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts. There are other tree nuts not included in this list that can also cause allergic reactions in rare instances.

Tree nuts and peanuts

People with tree nut allergies may be allergic to a single type of tree nut or they may be allergic to two or more different tree nuts. Although the peanut is part of the legume family and not a tree nut, some people with tree nut allergies also react to peanuts. Consult your allergist before eating peanuts or any tree nut that is not a regular part of your diet.

Read the labels

If you're allergic to tree nuts, the only way to avoid a reaction is to avoid all food and products that contain tree nuts and tree nut derivatives. Don't eat a food or product if the label has precautionary statements such as "may contain tree nuts". Read ingredient lists carefully and learn to identify other names for tree nuts, such as nut meats or filberts. Do not consume a food or product if there is no ingredient list or if there is a risk they might have been in contact with tree nuts. If there is not enough information to make a decision, you can always call to ask the company or speak to a knowledgeable person at a restaurant.



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Sources of tree nuts

Other names for tree nuts

Anacardium nuts
Filberts (hazelnuts)
Nut meats
Pinon
Queensland nut (macadamia)

Food and products that contain or often contain tree nuts

Calisson (a marzipan-like candy made from almonds)
Dishes such as almond chicken, pad thai, satay, chili and trout amandine
Gianduja and giandula (chocolate blended with hazel nuts)
Marzipan (almond paste)
Tree nut oils
Pralines
Spreads, for example, almond paste-based spreads, cheese spreads, chocolate nut spreads
Nougat (sugar paste made with nuts), for example, Torrone
Nut butter, for example, almond butter, cashew butter
Nutella
Vegetarian dishes



Other possible sources of tree nuts

Baked goods
Baking mixes, cereals, crackers and muesli
Barbecue and pesto sauces
Dressings and gravies
Flavoured coffees
Frozen desserts
Liqueurs, for example, amaretto, Frangelico
Natural flavourings and extracts, for example, pure almond extract
Salads, for example, Waldorf salad
Snack foods, for example, trail mix

Non-food sources of tree nuts

Bean bags, kick sacks/hacky sacks
Bird seed
Cosmetics, hair care products, sun screens
Massage oils
Pet food

Tree nuts oil

People who are allergic to tree nuts should also avoid tree nut oil. Very few tree nut oils on the market have been refined enough to remove the proteins that can trigger allergic reactions.

Coconut and nutmeg

Coconut and nutmeg are not included in the list of tree nuts. Most people with a tree nut allergy can eat coconut and nutmeg safely. Some people, however, do react to coconut and nutmeg. If you have a tree nut allergy, consult your allergist before trying coconut or nutmeg products.