

FOOD ALLERGIES ARE NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT
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Think of food allergies, and most people do not realize the extent you have to go through to keep yourself, or your loved one, safe. It oftentimes takes a lot of detective work to find out what a person is allergic to. When my husband developed a food allergy in his 40's, it took us quite a while to figure out what was going on. The first time he developed a rash we had just come back from eating sushi at the Japanese restaurant, so I assumed it was a seafood allergy. The second time he had a reaction it was after eating a hamburger, well there went the seafood idea. The third time he had eaten a Chinese meal at the house. It took four times before we were able to establish a connection, when he had a reaction to Gardetto's chips. Each time the reactions became more severe, but we were finally able to determine the allergy was to sesame seeds and sesame oil. If you have an allergic reaction, keep a food journal so you can see what the common denominator is.

It is important if you have a food allergy that you keep benadryl on your person, in the event you have a reaction. If you are not able to figure out the common denominator, or if the reaction is severe you need to speak with your health care provider. Your health care provider may require you to carry an epi pen.

Most restaurants are very caring and knowledgeable about food allergies. It is important you speak with your server if you have food allergies. We would not have realized without speaking with our server that the salad dressing at most Japanese restaurants contains sesame oil, and many persons who prepare sushi rolls rub sesame oil on their hands to help the sushi rolls to stick together better. We also have to be very careful with bread, as many restaurants have buns with sesame seeds embedded into them.

Whenever, we go to the grocery store, we have to read the ingredients to ensure there is no sesame oil or sesame seeds contained in the food we are buying.

How do you know if you may have a food allergy:

1. Food allergy symptoms usually develop within a few minutes to two hours after eating the food, which you have the allergy.
2. A person can develop a food allergy overnight to something they have always eaten.
3. The most common food allergy signs and symptoms include:
 - Tingling or itching in the mouth
 - Hives, itching or eczema
 - Swelling of the lips, face, tongue and throat or other parts of the body
 - Wheezing, nasal congestion or trouble breathing
 - Abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting
 - Dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting

www.mayoclinic.org was used in obtaining a portion of this information.