

## 1.4 Food Allergies & Sensitivities

The principal difference between allergies and intolerances is that an allergy makes the immune system intervene against what it considers a threat; an intolerance is the metabolism which causes a digestive issue.

### Food Allergy

An allergy is an immediate reaction of our organism occurring when it comes in contact with an allergen (a substance that our body identifies as a threat). In response to that threat, our immune system defends itself by producing immunoglobulins, an inflammatory process that can cause redness, respiratory issues, edema, etc.

Unlike a food intolerance, a food allergy occurs immediately, just after the food has been eaten (even if just a small amount of food was ingested) and, in extreme cases, touched or inhaled.

While for some it can just cause mild symptoms or discomfort, for other people it can cause a serious or even life-threatening reaction.

#### Most common allergens

Dairy, eggs, fish and shellfish, soy, wheat and other gluten cereals, celery, mustard, sesame and nuts (especially peanuts, which cause more severe reactions).

#### Most common symptoms

- A rash or red, itchy skin
- Stuffy or itchy nose, sneezing, or itchy and teary eyes
- Vomiting, stomach cramps or diarrhea
- Angioedema or swelling
- Trouble breathing
- Dizziness and lightheadedness



**Anaphylaxis** is a serious allergic reaction causing symptoms which may include difficulty breathing, dizziness, rash or loss of consciousness. Without immediate treatment anaphylaxis can be fatal.

### Intolerance or Food Sensitivity

A food intolerance response takes place in the digestive system. It occurs when you are unable to digest, metabolize or assimilate the compounds of certain foods.

This could be due to enzyme deficiencies, sensitivity to food additives or reactions to naturally occurring chemicals in foods. Often, people can eat small amounts of the food without causing immediate problems, though intolerances tend to cause more problems in the long run. Therefore, food intolerance is not as severe as food allergy.

#### Most common intolerances

Lactose, fructose, gluten and histamine.

#### Most common symptoms

- Gastrointestinal issues: nausea, abdominal pain, gas, diarrhea...
- Skin issues as acne, eczema, rash...
- Headaches and migraine
- Sickness, dizziness, and fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Breathing problems
- Anxiety, lethargy or depression

After being diagnosed, a food intolerance disappears as soon as that particular food is eliminated from the diet.

### \* Celiac Disease

An autoimmune disease that occurs in genetically predisposed people for whom the ingestion of gluten leads to damage in the small intestine. This condition is manageable by cutting out gluten and by-products completely from the diet (wheat, barley, rye and oats).

Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, loss of appetite, anemia and mood changes, among many others.

You will find all the information you need here: <https://celiac.org/>

## Cross Contamination

Cross contamination is the process by which microorganisms or allergens can be transferred from one food to another. It's produced both by indirect contact (through hands, kitchen towels, tools or surfaces) and by direct contact between foods.

It's important to adopt these simple fundamental measures to prevent cross contamination:

- Wash your hands with water and soap frequently
- Keep all surfaces, tools and equipment clean
- Always use clean kitchen towels or use paper towels instead
- Store food in the refrigerator in closed, individual and labeled containers