



Tree Nut Allergy

Tree nuts are nuts that grow on trees. They include almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachio and walnuts. Peanuts are in a different category (pea family) since they grow underground. Up to half of individuals allergic to peanuts will also be allergic to tree nuts.

Some individuals with hay fever can be allergic to pecan and walnut trees. Here, the individuals are allergic to the pollen of the trees- not the nuts themselves. There is no cross-reactivity between pollen from pecan/walnut trees and the nuts of these trees.

One of the biggest difficulties with nut avoidance has to do with cross-contamination. Dishes and foods can be contaminated with nuts during processing and cooking. Please inform the school and school nurses about any allergies your child has so that we can inform the canteen and teachers. Also please teach your child not to share snacks etc. in school.

Do not bring to school:

- Almond
- Brazil nut
- Cashew
- Chestnut
- Filbert
- Hazelnut
- Macadamia nut
- Peanuts
- Pine nut
- Pistachio
- Walnut

Safe to eat:

- Nutmeg is safe to eat. Although the name would lead one to believe it is made from nuts, it is actually made from the seed of the fruit that is grown on a tropical evergreen called *Myristica fragrans*.
- Water Chestnut is safe to consume and should not be confused with chestnut.
- Coconuts

What about coconuts?

There is some confusion as to whether coconuts should be classified as nuts or drupes (which also include walnuts and almonds). Regardless of the classification, what really matters is whether there is cross-reactivity between tree nuts and coconuts. What is known so far is that coconut allergy is a rare allergy - only a few case reports have been published. In some cases, but not all, the individuals also had tree nut allergies and cross-reactivity between these foods was detected during testing. Thus, to be safe, individuals with tree nut allergies may want to be tested to coconut allergy before consuming them.

If you have any questions, please contact our School Nurse Team. Thank you!

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