

# Allergens



A **food allergy** occurs when the immune system of the body manufactures antibodies after a certain protein (allergen) has been consumed. When lots of antibodies are manufactured, it causes certain symptoms in the body. This can include the following:

- \* skin reaction, e.g. 'rash'
- \* nose, throat and lung reaction, e.g. nasal inflammation, asthma
- \* reaction in the digestive tract, e.g. cramps, nausea, diarrhoea

A **food intolerance** is a reaction that occurs after a person has eaten a certain food, but the immune system is not affected into reacting. The symptoms may be consistent with that of a food allergy. Lactose intolerance is such an example and occurs as a result of a deficiency in a specific digestive enzyme.

Foods containing egg, milk, wheat, soy, maize, peanut and gluten are discussed, as well as alternative choices for the person with an allergy for or intolerance of one of these foods. Other common allergies occurring in adults are fish, shellfish and nuts



The following icons are used to indicate possible allergens in the food



**Gluten wheat**  
bulgar wheat, wheat bran,  
wheat flour, barley, semolina,  
couscous, oats, gravy powders



**Peanuts**



**Nuts**



**Fish**



**Soya**



**Sesame**



**Crustaceans**  
Shellfish: shrimp, lobster  
crab, crayfish



**Eggs**



**Lactose**



**Molluscs**  
Shellfish: oysters, mussels,  
clams