

## Resources

More information on navigating nutrition in your community, proper home hygiene, and other related topics can be found online at:

Center for Health & Hygiene in the Home and Community:

[www.simmons.edu/hygieneandhealth](http://www.simmons.edu/hygieneandhealth)

Look for our brochures on:

- Navigating Food Labels

FDA—U.S. Food and Drug Administration: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

- Safety Recalls

[www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/default.htm)

### RECIPES & TIPS

FARE—Food Allergy Research & Education: [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)

- Tips on Making Ingredient Substitutions

[www.foodallergy.org/tools-and-resources/managing-food-allergies/cooking-and-baking](http://www.foodallergy.org/tools-and-resources/managing-food-allergies/cooking-and-baking)

The American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology:

[www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org)

- Allergy-free Holiday Recipes

[www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/allergies/food-allergies/food-allergy-free-recipes/](http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/allergies/food-allergies/food-allergy-free-recipes/)

Kids With Food Allergies – Recipes:

[www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/recipes.html](http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/recipes.html)



### *Center for Health & Hygiene in Home & Community*

The Center for Health and Hygiene in Home and Community serves as a national and international resource for information and education, applied research, professional training and conferences. The Center focuses on issues relating to hygiene and infection control in areas such as:

- consumer food safety
- home hygiene
- daycare
- preschool
- homecare
- sports and leisure activity
- travel and hospitality

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## Hidden Allergens in Processed and Prepared Foods



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Many people rely heavily on processed or prepared foods throughout the week. For example, many foods that are used in cooking are partially prepared or pre-processed by food manufacturers before they are cooked at restaurants or sold at a grocery store. If you have allergies to specific ingredients, you rely on accurate labeling and reporting.

This pamphlet is dedicated to approaches to avoiding common allergens in foods, even when they are ‘hidden’.

**Tip 1: Meet Your Allergens**

The eight most common allergens are proteins from:

- Wheat
- Soy
- Milk
- Egg
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Peanut
- Tree Nuts



Proteins from these items can cause allergic reactions. Food allergy symptoms can vary, but are at worst case anaphylaxis. In most cases, the treatment for food allergies is complete avoidance of the ingredient that causes the reaction. People may be allergic to more than one ingredient.

People can also have sensitivities or intolerances to certain foods. These can also cause poor reactions—typically less severe—and people can manage their symptoms through dietary avoidance.

**Tip 2: Review the Language of Labels**

Label reading is key to understanding what is in prepared and processed foods. Each food must list its ingredients using their typical names. In addition, food processors are required to highlight common allergens not easily identifiable in the ingredient list. For example, salted peanuts that list “peanuts, salt” as ingredients do not need to then say “contains peanuts”, although many manufacturers opt to list this information in both places.

There are two other exceptions in allergen labeling laws:

1. Ingredients that are not regulated by the FDA include eggs, meats, and poultry. Eggs—therefore—do not need to be highlighted beyond the ingredient list.



2. Highly refined oils from the major allergens, like highly refined vegetable oil from soybeans.



Learning alternative common names for allergens is an important skill for everyone who is serving or making foods for people with food allergies or sensitivities. For example, individuals that are gluten intolerant should know which ingredients contain gluten\* or may contain it:

- Wheat, flour/meal, filler, wheat starch
- Barley, barley malt/extract
- Graham flour
- Rye, rye flour
- Semolina, couscous, durum
- Oats (cross-contamination likely with wheat)
- Faro, bulgar, triticale, spelt
- Kamut, matzo, emmer, eikorn

\*Partial list



Check and re-check labels since food manufacturers change their recipes from time to time.

**Tip 3: Understand Food Recalls**

When ingredient lists do not include allergens that are present in the food, these items are recalled from store shelves and removed from circulation. Undeclared allergens is the second most common reason for foods to be recalled as these ingredients can pose a food safety issue to some consumers.



Up-to-date information on food recalls is available from the FDA.

Restaurants and other organizations that serve or provide food to the public are required to monitor FDA recalls of foods. Wholesale food vendors do the same. These regulations are part of their food safety licensure and protocols.

Be proactive! Join a food safety newsfeed to get the latest information on recalls.

**Tip 4: Replace Processed Ingredients with Fresh-Made Recipes**

Many people use prepared foods as ingredients in home cooking. For example, spaghetti sauce or salad dressing is something many people will buy at the store and think of and use as a single ingredient.

Explore new recipes and ingredient substitutions! You will be able to monitor ingredients, and possibly avoid some ‘hidden allergens’. See our resource list for ideas.

