

Family Child Care Food Allergy Fact Sheets



Peanut Allergies

Peanuts are one of the nine major allergens in the United States. Together, they cause about 90% of all food-related allergic reactions. This fact sheet will discuss how to manage peanut allergies in a family child care.

How are children affected by peanut allergies?

According to the Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) organization, peanut allergies are the most common food allergy for children and the second most common for adults. The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) found that peanut allergies among children have increased by 21% from 2010 to 2017. Currently, about 2.5% of children in the United States are allergic to peanuts. However, about 20% of children with a peanut allergy do outgrow it.

Why should precautions be taken with peanut allergies?

For some children, even small amounts of peanuts can cause a severe reaction. Touching or inhaling peanut dust is less likely to cause severe reactions compared with eating them. Always be extremely careful to prevent children with peanut allergies from accidentally having contact with peanuts.



What foods contain peanuts?

There are many unexpected sources of peanuts, so reading ingredient lists on food labels is important to prevent exposure. The following charts list items that could contain peanuts and should be avoided.

Peanuts and Peanut-Based Products

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial nuts (deflavored peanuts that are reflavored with pecan, walnut, or almond) • Beer nuts • Mandelonas (peanuts soaked in almond flavoring) • Mixed nuts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nut meat • Nut pieces • Peanuts (goobers, groundnuts, monkey nuts) • Peanut butter/paste • Peanut butter chips • Peanut flour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanut oil* (cold-pressed, expressed, expelled); arachis oil, Arachis, Arachis hypogaea • Peanut protein hydrolysate • Peanut sauce • Peanut syrup • Powdered peanut butter |
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*Highly refined peanut oil is not required to be labeled as an allergen. It has been shown to be safe for the majority of people allergic to peanuts. Peanut oils that are cold-pressed, expelled, or extruded may contain peanut protein and are, therefore, NOT safe for use. Check with the State licensed healthcare professional to determine if peanut oil is safe for a child with a peanut allergy. A State licensed healthcare professional is defined as an individual authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law.

Dishes, Foods, and Products That May Contain Peanuts

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked goods (brownies, cakes, cookies, muffins) • Breading • Breakfast/cereal bars • Breakfast cereals • Candies, candy bars, chocolates • Chili (thickened with peanut butter) • Crumb topping • Egg rolls • Enchilada sauce (thickened with peanut butter) • Energy/protein bars • Flavored coffees, creamers, and syrups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frozen yogurt, ice cream • Glazes, marinades • Gluten-free products • Graham cracker crust • Granola bars • Gravies • Hot chocolate • Hydrolyzed plant protein • Hydrolyzed vegetable protein • Lupin/lupine (lupin and peanuts belong to the legume family; known cross-reactivity; common flour substitute for gluten-free food) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marzipan • Nougat • Pancakes • Pesto • Potato pancakes • Pudding • Salad dressing • Sauces (chili sauce, enchilada sauce, gravy, hot sauce, mole sauce, pesto, spaghetti sauce) • Specialty pizzas • Trail mix • Vegetarian food products, especially those advertised as meat substitute |
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Many items may not contain peanuts but may be produced in a facility where peanuts are processed or used as an ingredient. As a result, cross-contact with peanuts may occur. Do not give a food to a child with a peanut allergy that is labeled with an advisory statement such as being produced or manufactured in a facility with peanuts. Some food items that may be produced in facilities that also handle peanuts include:

- Alternative nut butter (soy nut and sunflower)
- Breakfast bars, cereal bars, and granola bars
- Sunflower seeds

Always read the ingredient lists, check for allergen information, and consider cross-contact before serving any food to a child with a food allergy.

What substitutes can be used for peanuts in meals?

The following chart lists common menu items that may be used as safe substitutions to items that contain peanuts. Always carefully read labels, even for foods that do not usually contain peanuts.

Menu Items That May Contain Peanuts*	Possible Substitutes*†
Breakfast cereals	Breakfast cereals without peanuts
Mixed dish containing peanuts or peanut butter	Mixed dish without peanuts or peanut butter
Peanut butter	Almond butter, cashew nut butter, sesame seed butter, soy nut butter, sunflower seed butter

*All meals and snacks claimed for reimbursement must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Please visit www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks for more information. For children with food allergies, providers are required to provide meal modifications as stated in the child's medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. Registered dietitians can also submit medical statements for meal modifications for children with disabilities. Registered dietitians are not required to have a State license. CACFP operations are required to implement this change by October 1, 2025. Meal modifications may require providing meals and snacks that do not meet CACFP meal pattern requirements. These meals are reimbursable as long as there is a medical statement on file documenting the necessary accommodations. Providers may choose to accommodate food-related disabilities without a signed medical statement if the meal modifications still meet the meal pattern requirements. Refer to the *Family Child Care Food Allergy Fact Sheets – Accommodating Children with Food Allergies* for more information.

†Always review the ingredient list to verify ingredients and check for possible cross-contact.



Can a child with a peanut allergy consume tree nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc.)?

It depends on the child. About 30% to 40% of people with peanut allergies are also allergic to tree nuts, so allergists may recommend that people with peanut allergies also avoid tree nuts. However, some children may only be allergic to peanuts and be able to eat other allergens. If there are questions for a particular child, refer to that child's medical statement or ask for clarification from their State licensed healthcare professional with the consent of the parent/guardian.

Additionally, the possibility of cross-contact between peanuts and tree nuts during the manufacturing process is high so always check ingredient lists for suspected allergens. For more information on tree nuts, refer to the *Family Child Care Food Allergy Fact Sheet – Tree Nuts*.

Can seed butters (for example, sunflower seed butter) be substituted for peanut butter?

It depends on the child. Many seed butters are produced on equipment used to process peanut butter. This makes them a risky substitute unless the manufacturer specifies that the item is peanut-free. Check with the manufacturer to determine if the food product may contain peanuts. Also, check the child's medical statement for other known allergens such as a seed allergy.

For an alternative to a peanut butter sandwich for an activity such as a field trip, there are several options. One option may be to substitute the peanut butter with soy or sunflower seed butters if they are produced in peanut-free facilities. A few other options include a cheese sandwich, hummus or bean dip and chips, or a pre-cooked meal carried in a cooler with temperature control.



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For More Information

Food Allergy Research & Education

www.foodallergy.org

Institute of Child Nutrition

www.theicn.org/foodsafety

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Food Allergens

www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/food-allergies

This project was funded using U.S. Department of Agriculture grant funds. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs>

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Suggested Reference Citation:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2024). *Family child care food allergy fact sheets – Peanut allergies*. University, MS: Author.

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10/11/2024