

# Family Child Care Food Allergy Fact Sheets



## Shellfish Allergies

Shellfish 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 shellfish allergies in a family child care.

### Which shellfish are most likely to cause an allergic reaction?

There are two types of shellfish:

- Crustaceans (crab, lobster, shrimp, crawfish, and prawn)
- Mollusks (clams, mussels, squid, snails, oysters, and scallops)

Crustacean shellfish are considered the most allergenic. Because some people with shellfish allergies are allergic to more than one type, they may be told to avoid all shellfish. Parents/guardians who have a child with a shellfish allergy should check with their State licensed healthcare professional to find out what type of shellfish their child should avoid (crustaceans and/or mollusks). A State licensed healthcare professional is defined as an individual authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law.



### How are children affected by shellfish allergies?

Research presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting for the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) suggests that shellfish allergies among children have increased by 7% from 2010 to 2017. Shellfish allergies are considered life-long.

### How are shellfish written in the ingredient list on a food label?

The *Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA)* requires that the specific type of crustacean shellfish (such as shrimp and crabs) be included in the ingredient list on the food label. Mollusks are not considered a major allergen by *FALCPA*, so ingredient information for mollusks may not be on the label. Because mollusks are not required to be labeled the same way as crustaceans, take special care when reading ingredient lists for them. The following chart lists which shellfish are in the crustacean and mollusk families.

Crustaceans	Mollusks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnacle</li> <li>• Crab</li> <li>• Crawfish (crawdada, crayfish, ecrevisse)</li> <li>• Krill</li> <li>• Lobster (langouste, langoustine, Moreton bay bugs, scampi, tomalley)</li> <li>• Prawn</li> <li>• Shrimp (crevette, scampi)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abalone</li> <li>• Clam (cherrystone, geoduck, littleneck, Pismo, quahog)</li> <li>• Cockle</li> <li>• Cuttlefish</li> <li>• Limpet (lapas, opihi)</li> <li>• Mussel</li> <li>• Octopus</li> <li>• Oyster</li> <li>• Periwinkle</li> <li>• Scallop</li> <li>• Sea cucumber</li> <li>• Sea urchin</li> <li>• Snail (escargot)</li> <li>• Squid (calamari)</li> <li>• Whelk (Turban shell)</li> </ul>

If there is uncertainty about whether a food product contains a type of shellfish that a child must avoid, call the manufacturer for more information and do not serve the food.

### What foods contain shellfish?

Shellfish can be an ingredient in common sauces and condiments, such as soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce, along with other food products. It is important to read all ingredient lists on food labels to check for shellfish. If going on a field trip or ordering out food, avoid seafood restaurants because the possibility of cross-contact is very high. Cross-contact is the accidental transfer of allergens to an allergen-free food or surface. The following chart lists items that could contain shellfish and should be avoided.

Shellfish Foods and Dishes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bouillabaisse</li> <li>• Ceviche (shrimp)</li> <li>• Cioppino (fish and shellfish stew)</li> <li>• Clam chowder</li> <li>• Egg rolls</li> <li>• Jambalaya</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moqueca</li> <li>• Paella</li> <li>• Run Down</li> <li>• Seafood curry</li> <li>• Seafood extracts (crab, clam)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seafood fried rice or noodles</li> <li>• Seafood stir-fry</li> <li>• Shrimp paste</li> <li>• Sushi/sashimi</li> </ul>
Other Foods, Products, and Ingredients That May Contain Shellfish		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clam extract/juice</li> <li>• Crab extract</li> <li>• Cuttlefish ink</li> <li>• Fish sauce (may be made from krill)</li> <li>• Fish sticks or portions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish stock (may be labeled fish bouillon or fumet)</li> <li>• Glucosamine (also a dietary supplement)</li> <li>• Gumbo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitation crab/seafood, surimi (often contains crab or shellfish components)</li> <li>• Oyster sauce</li> <li>• Soy sauce</li> <li>• Worcestershire sauce</li> </ul>

Many items may not contain shellfish but may be produced in a facility where shellfish is processed or used as an ingredient. As a result, cross-contact with shellfish may occur. Do not give a food to a child with a shellfish allergy that is labeled with an advisory statement such as being produced or manufactured in a facility with shellfish.



## What substitutes can be used for shellfish in meals served to children?

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

Menu Items and Condiments That May Contain Shellfish*	Possible Substitutes*†
Curry, fried rice, or stir-fried dishes with seafood, fish sauce, or oyster sauce	Curry, fried rice, or stir-fried dishes without seafood, fish sauce, or oyster sauce
Fish sticks or nuggets	Chicken nuggets or patties
Jambalaya, paella	Jambalaya or paella made without shellfish, other rice dishes without shellfish
Salad dressing, fish sauce, oyster sauce	Dressings and sauces that do not contain shellfish
Shellfish (crab, lobster, shrimp)	Beef, pork, poultry, fish, beans, peas, legumes
Surimi seafood	Beef, pork, poultry, fish, beans, peas, legumes

\*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](http://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.

## How can cross-contact affect a child with shellfish allergies?

Cross-contact is a concern for all allergens, but there are specific concerns related to shellfish allergies. Deep-fat frying is not an allowable method of cooking in family child care, but if shellfish is pan-fried or sautéed, the cooking oil can become contaminated. If you have a child with shellfish allergies, do not cook any food for this child in the same oil that was used to cook shellfish or shellfish products. Cross-contact also can occur from utensils and grills.

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## **For More Information**

Food Allergy Research & Education

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

Institute of Child Nutrition

[www.theicn.org/foodsafety](http://www.theicn.org/foodsafety)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

*Food Allergens*

[www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/food-allergies](http://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/food-allergies)

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