



About Allergens



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Food allergies affect a small proportion of the general population. However, for those affected, the reaction to the allergen can be extremely severe and even fatal. Some of the more common foods that may trigger severe reactions include: eggs, milk & milk products, soybean & soy products, seafood, wheat & other cereals, sesame, tree nuts & peanuts.

While PCA is in the business of processing and marketing peanuts, we acknowledge that peanuts can be an extremely serious allergic threat to a small segment of susceptible consumers.

Those allergic to peanuts represent about 1% of the general population but in children the proportion that is allergic may be higher (2%). Twenty per cent of individuals do outgrow their allergy to peanuts but for most it is a life-long allergy.

Exposure to peanuts can occur in three ways:

- **Direct contact.** The most common cause of peanut allergic reactions is accidental ingestion of peanut, usually as an ingredient in a more complex food like a biscuit, a casserole or a soup.
- **Cross-contact.** This is the unintended introduction of peanuts into a product. It's generally the result of exposure to peanuts during processing or handling of a food product.
- **Inhalation.** Individuals at risk of severe allergic reactions rarely have an anaphylactic response when inhaling a food containing peanut however care needs to be taken, especially when peanut flour or cold pressed peanut oil is being used.

PCA tries to take a very responsible approach to dealing with the allergen issue and is working to:

- Create a better market understanding of the issue
- Encourage accurate and responsible labelling on food products
- Develop partnerships with appropriate national and international agencies
- Educate individuals, parents and teachers regarding the allergen issue.

PCA understands the emotive implication that peanut allergies can present in the media and in the general community.

PCA's commitment to peanut sensitive individuals is demonstrated through:

- Assisting individuals and groups to understand the allergen issue.
- Financial sponsorship of peanut allergen research.
- Dissemination of research findings to customers, professionals and support groups.
- Providing a reference point for detection research and methods.
- Responsible positioning of information present on PCA's website.
- Founding member of the Food Safety Centre Allergen Bureau.
- Providing responsible Facts & Professional Contact Details to assist with the identification & management of peanut sensitive individuals.



More than 80 years of leadership in the Australian Peanut Industry

Symptoms:

Allergic symptoms may be mild, moderate or serious. Mild to moderate symptoms include hives, itching, redness, swelling of the face, lips and eyes, vomiting and abdominal pain.

The most serious and potentially deadly allergic reaction to peanuts is an anaphylactic response. If an individual is highly sensitive, an anaphylactic reaction usually develops within 20 minutes to two hours of ingestion of the food. Symptoms may be mild and then develop rapidly causing the airways (bronchi) to constrict, making breathing difficult. Blood pressure may drop to life-threatening low levels, making the person feel dizzy or lose consciousness.

Signs of an anaphylactic reaction include:

- Wheezing or a persistent cough
- Difficult / noisy breathing
- Swelling or tightness in throat
- Swelling of tongue
- Difficulty talking and / or hoarse voice
- Dizziness
- Loss of consciousness and / or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Seek emergency medical care if you or someone else develops an anaphylactic reaction. Dial 000 in an emergency.

MAJOR HOSPITALS (in each State and Territory)

Hospital	City	Contact Telephone No.
Prince of Wales Hospital	Sydney	(02) 9282 2222
Royal North Shore Hospital	Sydney	(02) 9926 7111
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital	Sydney	(02) 9515 6111
Sydney Children's Hospital	Sydney	(02) 9382 1111
Westmead Children's Hospital	Sydney	(02) 9845 0000
Mater Children's Private Hospital	Brisbane	(07) 3840 1999
Princess Alexandra Hospital	Brisbane	(07) 3240 2111
Royal Brisbane Hospital	Brisbane	(07) 3636 8111
Royal Children's Hospital	Melbourne	(03) 9345 5522
Royal Melbourne Hospital	Melbourne	(03) 9342 7000
St Vincent's Hospital	Melbourne	(03) 9288 2211
Princess Margaret Hospital for Children	Perth	(08) 9340 8222
Royal Perth Hospital	Perth	(08) 9224 6500
Royal Adelaide Hospital	Adelaide	(08) 8222 4000
Women's and Children's Hospital	Adelaide	(08) 8161 7000
Canberra Hospital	Canberra	(02) 6244 2222
Royal Darwin Hospital	Darwin	(08) 8922 8888

CONTACTS:**Anaphylaxis Australia**

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For further information:

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