



GS6

GROCERY SHOPPING

How to Avoid the Big 8 Food Allergens

Time: 70 Minutes

Food allergies can be a big challenge, especially since there's no cure for them. Many staples in your refrigerator and pantry are the same for everyone in the family, including those who have food allergies or sensitivities. That's why it's so important to understand, identify and prevent contact with the Big 8 food allergens.

If you cook for someone with sensitivities or allergies, our goal is to help you learn how to avoid the foods that trigger a reaction, manage your health and keep an eye on your budget. Let's get started!

OBJECTIVES:

List the eight most common food allergies and sensitivities and why it's critical for some people to avoid them.

Describe shopping tips to manage food allergies and maintain good health.

Prepare a weekly grocery list to accommodate a common food allergy.

SETUP

- Review the resource list and print it out. Purchase all necessary supplies after reviewing the [HFL Cost Calculator](#).
- Set up the stations for participants with the necessary activity supplies.
- Provide computer, internet access and projector, if available.

INTRO (10 Minutes)

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Take care of any housekeeping items (closest bathroom, water fountain, silence cell phones, etc.).
- Give a brief description of the educational experience.
- Engage in an icebreaker from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#).

DEMO (20 Minutes)

- Demonstrate content (see demo script). Play video as indicated.

ACTIVITY (15 Minutes)

- Divide participants into eight teams. Ask each team to blindly select an index card with a food sensitivity written on it. The team will create a grocery shopping list to prepare a specific meal around their chosen sensitivity. Share the lists with the entire group.

RECAP (10 Minutes)

- Pass out the handout(s) and go through them together.

GOAL SETTING/CLOSING (15 Minutes)

- Engage in a goal setting activity from the bank of options provided in the [Welcome Toolkit](#). Pass out the Setting SMART Goals handout to participants.
- Thank participants and encourage them to join the next activity. (Provide date/time/location if known.)



NOTES: Read legal liability disclaimer before activity: [Food Liability Disclaimer](#). Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts. This Healthy for Life® Educational Experience was created by Aramark and the American Heart Association as part of our Healthy for Life® Initiative. We are proud to be working together to help improve the health of all Americans.

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How to Avoid the Big 8 Food Allergens Resource List

HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

Find these resources on AHA's YouTube channel or heart.org/healthyforgood

- ❑ Video – [How to Avoid the Big 8 Food Allergens](#)

Find these resources in this lesson

- ❑ Handout – [Tips for Avoiding Your Allergen](#)
- ❑ Recipe – [Brown Rice with Olives and Basil](#)
- ❑ Handout – [Setting SMART Goals](#)

Find this resource at foodallergy.org

- ❑ Handout – [Tips for Avoiding Your Allergen](#)

SPACE SETUP

- ❑ Chairs and tables for participants
- ❑ Lectern
- ❑ Poster board, easel pad of paper or large dry erase board
- ❑ Sharpie or dry erase marker
- ❑ Easel
- ❑ Pens for participants
- ❑ Folders
- ❑ Computer, internet access and projector, if available

ACTIVITY SUPPLIES

- ❑ Eight 3" x 5" index cards. (Write one of the eight food allergies on each card.)
- ❑ A handful of food labels to demonstrate the tip on reading labels.

Write one of these statements on each index card:

- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for breakfast menu for someone with a milk allergy or sensitivity.
- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for breakfast menu for someone with an egg allergy or sensitivity.
- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for lunch menu for someone with a wheat allergy or sensitivity.
- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for several snacks for someone with a peanut allergy or sensitivity.
- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for lunch salad menu for someone with a tree nut allergy or sensitivity.
- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for dinner menu for someone with a shellfish allergy or sensitivity.
- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for dinner menu for someone with a fish allergy or sensitivity.
- ❑ Prepare grocery shopping list for dinner menu for someone with soy allergy or sensitivity.

How to Avoid the Big 8 Food Allergens Demo Script



SAY:

You may wonder: What's the difference between a food allergy and a food sensitivity?



A true food allergy causes an immune system reaction that affects numerous organs in the body. It can cause a range of symptoms and in some cases can be severe or even life-threatening.



Food sensitivity symptoms are generally less serious and often are limited to digestive problems.



There are plenty of myths surrounding food allergies. Here are a few common ones:



Myth Number 1: Food allergies aren't serious.

FALSE: That's a widespread myth. Food allergies are not only life-altering but potentially life-threatening. People who live with them should always be taken seriously.



Myth Number 2: Eating a little bit won't hurt.

FALSE: Even a trace of food allergen can trigger a severe reaction.



Myth Number 3: Each allergic reaction will get worse.

FALSE: Food allergy reactions are unpredictable. You never know if a reaction is going to be mild, moderate or severe.



Myth Number 4: A food allergy always develops in childhood.

FALSE: You can develop a food allergy at any age, even to a food that you've safely eaten before.



Myth Number 5: Peanut is the most dangerous food allergy.

FALSE: No single food allergy poses a greater risk than another. Even a very small amount of the food is enough to cause a reaction.



Today, we are going to learn about what's called "The Big 8" food allergies and sensitivities. We'll also discuss how to grocery shop to accommodate people who are sensitive to these foods.



For starters, raise your hand if you know a common food allergy or sensitivity?

Call on people with their hands raised and ask them to name a food sensitivity. As they name "The Big 8," write each one on the easel pad or eraser board. If they don't, name the remaining eight and finish the list yourself.

(The discussion doesn't have to be in any order, just as participants name each sensitivity.)



SAY:

Milk – SAY:

That's right. Milk and milk products such as ice cream, butter, cheese, sour cream and even yogurt can be a trigger.



Eggs – SAY:

Yes, eggs are another one, and that includes powdered eggs, eggnog and even mayonnaise.



Wheat – SAY:

Wheat is a big category and includes everything from flour products, cereals and pasta to breadcrumbs and bran. Some unexpected sources of wheat include salad dressing, marinara sauce and soups.



Peanuts – SAY:

Yes, peanuts are another one. Besides avoiding peanuts, people need to watch out for peanuts in baked goods, peanut oil and peanut butter.



Tree Nuts – SAY:


Tree nuts can also trigger allergy symptoms. There's a long list of nuts to avoid ranging from almonds, cashews and pecans to pistachios and hazelnuts.




Shellfish – SAY:


Shellfish, including shrimp, crab, lobster, prawns and crawfish.

How to Avoid the Big 8 Food Allergens Demo Script (Continued)


 **Fish – SAY:** Aside from shellfish, someone may be allergic to fish such as bass, trout and red snapper. Watch out for fish oil, fish stock, deep-fried items, caviar and Caesar salads or pizza toppings that use anchovies.


 **Soy – SAY:** Soy is common in Asian cuisine and includes edamame, tofu, soy milk and a range of soy products.


Point to your easel pad or eraser board and SAY:

 So, that's our list of "The Big 8." Now we will explore tips on how to grocery shop when people have one or more of these food sensitivities.


Hold up a handful of food labels and SAY:


 No. 1 – **Read food labels.** To help us avoid health risks, the Food & Drug Administration requires that food labels must clearly list the food source names of any ingredients that are one of "The Big 8" allergens or contain any protein derived from a major food allergen.


 The name of the food source must appear in parentheses after the name of the ingredient. For example, lecithin (soy); flour (wheat) and whey (milk). You also can look at the label's list of ingredients for a "contains" statement. For example, it will read, "contains wheat, milk and soy."


 Here are a few more tips to keep in mind when checking out labels:


- Be aware that ingredients can change without notice, so check the label every time you shop. Don't assume that the food product you've used for years is still safe. In fact, read the label two or three times just to be safe.
- Be especially aware if the packaging says "new" or "improved." Maybe the ingredients changed and the product now contains a food allergen.
- Be aware of unexpected sources of allergens.


 Now I'm passing out a handout that lists various ingredients—including some that could be hidden—that can spur an allergic reaction. Look for the handout's ingredients on food labels and ingredient lists.


 For example, if you see "rennet casein" on a food label, that could trigger a milk allergy. Or, "vitellin" could trigger an egg allergy. You may never have heard of "freekeh," but if it's on a food label it can trigger a wheat allergy or sensitivity.


 Be wary of samples handed out in grocery stores. Anyone with a food allergy should avoid eating an unlabeled sample.

 The best way to avoid problems is to plan before you go to the grocery store. It can be time consuming to make a meal plan for the entire week. But once you build it into your schedule, it becomes much easier. By following a list you'll also save money by avoiding impulse buys.

 And remember: Where you get your groceries can make a difference.

 Grocery stores often shelve allergy-safe foods in their "natural foods" or "health foods" sections. But they also may mix them in with non-allergy foods. For example, some stores stock gluten-free mixes and pastas alongside their gluten-containing counterparts.

 Virtually all supermarkets carry some dairy-free milk, especially soy, almond and rice milk. Look for allergy-safe foods in your grocery's frozen food section.

 Specialty groceries offer lots of options for allergy-safe shopping. They carry a variety of products for restricted diets and may offer pamphlets detailing the ones that are free of common allergens. Look for products bearing the brand labels of specialty grocery stores to save money.

How to Avoid the Big 8 Food Allergens Demo Script (Continued)



SAY:

Here's a breakdown of other grocery sources. Think about your best options as I run through them:



Warehouse clubs are generally cost-effective, but they may not offer many options. Most offer some dairy-free milk alternatives and nut-free snacks, but even those foods can include some "Big 8" allergens. Always check the label before purchasing.



Don't overlook ethnic markets. They are especially good for grain, fruit and vegetable allergies, since different food traditions may rely on grains and plants that are less common in American cooking. Be aware of cross contamination, especially if you are considering buying from bulk bins. And never buy any food whose ingredient label isn't clear.



Next, many **online retailers** sell allergy-friendly products and groceries. They offer the convenience of shopping from home and some even offer free shipping.



Food banks often strive to provide healthy, nutritious food. If you have food allergens or sensitivities, consider these tips when visiting a food bank:

- Always let the staff know you have a food allergy or sensitivity. You may want to speak to a supervisor to discuss your needs and safe food options.
- Be sure to review the original packaging so you can read the food labels. Read every label, every time because ingredients can change.
- Finally, let the staff know that cross-contamination can be dangerous. Find out what procedures are in place to avoid cross-contact in the storage areas.



As you prepare allergy-free meals at home, make extras and freeze what you don't use. Make your own convenience foods such as snacks and "TV dinners" so you always have something that's easy and safe to serve.

How to Avoid the Big 8 Food Allergens Activity Script



SAY:

Now we're going to divide you up into eight teams so you can practice what you've learned. You'll each select one of The Big 8 and prepare a grocery list for a specific meal avoiding that food allergen.

Once you're done, each group will share their list.

After the group activity SAY:



Great job preparing your allergen-free meal menus.



I have one final handout — a recipe for Brown Rice with Olives and Basil that is free of allergens and healthy for those with food sensitivities. Make it at home and enjoy.

FARE works on behalf of 32 million Americans with potentially life-threatening food allergies. To learn more, visit foodallergy.org.



Tips for Avoiding Your Allergen

- All FDA-regulated manufactured food products that contain a “major food allergen” (milk, wheat, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, crustacean shellfish, and soy) as an ingredient are required by U.S. law to list that allergen on the product label. For tree nuts, fish and crustacean shellfish, the specific type of nut or fish must be listed.
- Read all product labels carefully before purchasing and consuming any item.
- Be aware of unexpected sources of allergens, such as the ingredients listed below.
- *Note: This list does not imply that the allergen is always present in these foods; it is intended to serve as a reminder to always read the label and ask questions about ingredients.



For a Milk-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain milk or any of these ingredients:

butter, butter fat, butter oil, butter acid, butter ester(s)	lactalbumin, phosphate	<i>solids, whole</i> milk protein hydrolysate
buttermilk	lactoferrin	pudding
casein	lactose	Recaldent®
casein hydrolysate	lactulose	rennet casein
caseinates (in all forms)	milk (in all forms, including condensed, derivative, dry, evaporated, goat's milk and milk from other animals, lowfat, malted, milkfat, nonfat, powder, protein, skimmed,	sour cream, sour cream solids
cheese		sour milk solids
cottage cheese		tagatose
cream		whey (in all forms)
curds		whey protein
custard		hydrolysate
diacetyl		yogurt
ghee		
half-and-half		

Milk is sometimes found in the following:

artificial butter flavor	culture and other bacterial cultures	nisin
baked goods	luncheon meat, hot dogs, sausages	non dairy products
caramel candies		nougat
chocolate		
lactic acid starter		

Keep the following in mind:

- Individuals who are allergic to cow's milk are often advised to also avoid milk from other domestic animals. For example, goat's milk protein is similar to cow's milk protein and may, therefore, cause a reaction in individuals who have a milk allergy.



For a Wheat-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain wheat or any of these ingredients:

bread crumbs	protein, instant, pastry, self-rising, soft wheat, steel ground, stone ground, whole wheat)	semolina
bulgur	freekah	spelt
cereal extract	hydrolyzed wheat protein	sprouted wheat
club wheat	Kamut®	triticale
couscous	matzoh, matzoh meal (also spelled as matzo, matzah, or matza)	vital wheat gluten
cracker meal	pasta	wheat (bran, durum, germ, gluten, grass, malt, sprouts, starch)
durum	seitan	wheat bran hydrolysate
einkorn		wheat germ oil
emmer		wheat grass
farina		wheat protein isolate
faro		whole wheat berries
flour (all purpose, bread, cake, durum, enriched, graham, high gluten, high		

Wheat is sometimes found in the following:

glucose syrup	starch (gelatinized starch, modified starch, modified food starch, vegetable starch)	surimi
oats		
soy sauce		



For an Egg-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain eggs or any of these ingredients:

albumin (also spelled albumen)	livetin	vitellin
egg (dried, powdered, solids, white, yolk)	lysozyme	words starting with "ovo" or "ova" (such as ovalbumin)
eggnog	mayonnaise	
globulin	meringue (meringue powder)	
	surimi	

Egg is sometimes found in the following:

baked goods	fried rice	meatloaf or meatballs
breaded items	ice cream	nougat
drink foam (alcoholic, specialty coffee)	lecithin	pasta
egg substitutes	marzipan	
	marshmallows	

Keep the following in mind:

- Individuals with egg allergy should also avoid eggs from duck, turkey, goose, quail, etc., as these are known to be cross-reactive with chicken egg.
- While the whites of an egg contain the allergenic proteins, patients with an egg allergy must avoid all eggs completely.



For a Soy-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain soy or any of these ingredients:

edamame	soy protein (concentrate, hydrolyzed, isolate)
miso	shoyu
natto	soy sauce
soy (soy albumin, soy cheese, soy fiber, soy flour, soy grits, soy ice cream, soy milk, soy nuts, soy sprouts, soy yogurt)	tamari
	tempeh
	textured vegetable protein (TVP)
soya	tofu
soybean (curd, granules)	

Soy is sometimes found in the following:

Asian cuisine	vegetable gum
vegetable broth	vegetable starch

Keep the following in mind:

- The FDA exempts highly refined soybean oil from being labeled as an allergen. Studies show most allergic individuals can safely eat soy oil that has been highly refined (not cold pressed, expeller pressed, or extruded soybean oil).
- Most individuals allergic to soy can safely eat soy lecithin.
- Follow your doctor's advice regarding these ingredients.



Tips for Avoiding Your Allergen



For a Shellfish-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain shellfish or any of these ingredients:

barnacle	lobster (<i>langouste</i> , <i>langoustine</i> , <i>Moreton</i>)	prawns
crab	<i>bay bugs</i> , <i>scampi</i> , <i>tomalley</i>	shrimp (<i>crevette</i> , <i>scampi</i>)
crawfish (<i>crawdad</i> , <i>crayfish</i> , <i>ecrevisse</i>)		
krill		

! Mollusks are not considered major allergens under food labeling laws and may not be fully disclosed on a product label.

Your doctor may advise you to avoid mollusks or these ingredients:

abalone	limpet (<i>lapas</i> , <i>opihi</i>)	sea cucumber
clams (<i>cherrystone</i> , <i>geoduck</i> , <i>littleneck</i> , <i>pismo</i> , <i>quahog</i>)	mussels	sea urchin
cockle	octopus	snails (<i>escargot</i>)
cuttlefish	oysters	squid (<i>calamari</i>)
	periwinkle	whelk (<i>Turban shell</i>)
	scallops	

Shellfish are sometimes found in the following:

bouillabaisse	fish stock	surimi
cuttlefish ink	seafood flavoring (<i>e.g.</i> , <i>crab</i> or <i>clam</i> extract)	
glucosamine		

Keep the following in mind:

- Any food served in a seafood restaurant may contain shellfish protein due to cross-contact.
- For some individuals, a reaction may occur from inhaling cooking vapors or from handling fish or shellfish.



For a Peanut-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain peanuts or any of these ingredients:

artificial nuts	goobers	nut meat
beer nuts	ground nuts	peanut butter
cold pressed, expeller pressed, or extruded peanut oil	mixed nuts monkey nuts nut pieces	peanut flour peanut protein hydrolysate

Peanut is sometimes found in the following:

African, Asian (especially <i>Chinese</i> , <i>Indian</i> , <i>Indonesian</i> , <i>Thai</i> , and <i>Vietnamese</i>), and Mexican dishes	baked goods (<i>e.g.</i> , <i>pastries</i> , <i>cookies</i>) candy (including <i>chocolate</i> candy) chili egg rolls	enchilada sauce marzipan mole sauce nougat
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Keep the following in mind:

- Mandelonas are peanuts soaked in almond flavoring.
- The FDA exempts highly refined peanut oil from being labeled as an allergen. Studies show that most allergic individuals can safely eat peanut oil that has been highly refined (not cold pressed, expeller pressed, or extruded peanut oil). Follow your doctor's advice.
- A study showed that unlike other legumes, there is a strong possibility of cross-reaction between peanuts and lupine (or lupin). Flour derived from lupine is becoming a common substitute for gluten-containing flours. The law requires that a food product's ingredients must be listed on the label, such as "lupin" or "lupine".
- Arachis oil is peanut oil.
- Many experts advise patients allergic to peanuts to avoid tree nuts as well.
- Sunflower seeds are often produced on equipment shared with peanuts.
- Some alternative nut butters, such as soy nut butter or sunflower seed butter, are produced on equipment shared with other tree nuts and, in some cases, peanuts. Contact the manufacturer before eating these products.



For a Tree-Nut-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain nuts or any of these ingredients:

almond	litchi/lichee/lychee nut	pecan
artificial nuts	macadamia nut	pesto
beechnut	marzipan/almond paste	pili nut
Brazil nut	Nangai nut	pine nut (<i>also referred</i> <i>to as Indian</i> , <i>pignoli</i> , <i>pignolia</i> , <i>pignon</i> , <i>piñon</i> , and <i>pinyon</i> <i>nut</i>)
butternut	natural nut extract (<i>e.g.</i> , <i>almond</i> , <i>walnut</i>)	
cashew	nut butters (<i>e.g.</i> , <i>cashew</i> butter)	
chestnut	nut meal	pistachio
chinquapin nut	nut meat	praline
filbert/hazelnut	nut paste (<i>e.g.</i> , <i>almond</i> <i>paste</i>)	shea nut
gianduja (<i>a chocolate-</i> <i>nut mixture</i>)	nut pieces	walnut
ginkgo nut		
hickory nut		

Tree nuts are sometimes found in the following:

black walnut hull extract (<i>flavoring</i>)	nut distillates/alcoholic extracts	walnut hull extract (<i>flavoring</i>)
natural nut extract	nut oils (<i>e.g.</i> , <i>walnut</i> <i>oil</i> , <i>almond</i> oil)	

Keep the following in mind:

- Mortadella may contain pistachios.
- There is no evidence that coconut oil and shea nut oil/butter are allergenic.
- Many experts advise patients allergic to tree nuts to avoid peanuts as well.
- Talk to your doctor if you find other nuts not listed here.
- Coconut, the seed of a drupaceous fruit, has typically not been restricted in the diets of people with tree nut allergy. However, in October of 2006, the FDA began identifying coconut as a tree nut. Medical literature documents a small number of allergic reactions to coconut; most occurred in people who were not allergic to other tree nuts. Ask your doctor if you need to avoid coconut.



For a Fish-Free Diet

Fish is sometimes found in the following:

barbecue sauce	fish oil	pizza (<i>anchovy</i> topping)
bouillabaisse	fish sauce imitation fish or shellfish isinglass	roe
Caesar salad	lutefish maw, maws (<i>fish maw</i>)	salad dressing
caviar	fish stock	seafood flavoring
deep fried items	fish flour	shark cartilage
fish flavoring	fishmeal	shark fin
fish flour	nuoc mam (<i>Vietnamese</i> <i>name for fish sauce</i> ; <i>beware of other ethnic</i> <i>names</i>)	surimi
fish fume		sushi, sashimi
fish gelatin (<i>kosher</i> <i>gelatin</i> , <i>marine</i> <i>gelatin</i>)		Worcestershire sauce

Keep the following in mind:

- If you have fish allergy, avoid seafood restaurants. Even if you order a non-fish item off of the menu, cross-contact of fish protein is possible.
- Asian cookery often uses fish sauce as a flavoring base. Exercise caution when eating this type of cuisine.
- Fish protein can become airborne in the steam released during cooking and may cause an allergic reaction. Stay away from cooking areas when fish is being prepared.



Brown Rice with Olives and Basil

Makes 4 servings; ½ cup per serving
Per serving: 208 Calories; 0.5 g Saturated Fat; 139 mg Sodium



Serve this easy side dish with a grilled or roasted poultry entrée.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 1 teaspoon olive oil and 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided use
- 4 ounces button mushrooms, quartered
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- ¼ cup sliced black olives, drained
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the rice using the package directions, omitting the salt and margarine.
2. Meanwhile, in a medium nonstick skillet, heat 1 teaspoon oil over medium-high heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the mushrooms for 4 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in the garlic. Cook for 30 seconds, or until the mushrooms are tender and beginning to lightly brown, stirring frequently. Remove from the heat.
3. Stir in the olives and basil. Sprinkle with the salt and pepper. Cover to keep warm until ready to serve (at least 2 to 3 minutes, so the mushrooms have time to absorb the flavors). Stir the cooked rice into the mushroom mixture. Stir in the remaining 1 teaspoon oil.

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SPECIFIC

- What exactly do you want to accomplish?

MEASURABLE

- How will you track your progress towards your goal?

ACHIEVABLE

- Is reaching your goal possible with your full effort?

REALISTIC

- Do you have the resources and ability to achieve your goal? If not, how can you get them?

TIME-BOUND

- When will your goal be achieved?

EXAMPLE OF A SMART GOAL:

I will increase the number of fruit servings I eat daily by 2 cups within the next 3 months.

Personal SMART goal:
