

Nut-Free Guide

What is a nut?

Nuts are single-seeded fruits with high oil content. Typically, they are inside a solid outer shell. This includes hazelnuts, walnuts and pecans.

What is a nut allergy?

A nut allergy is caused when the immune system reacts to a protein found in nuts. A reaction develops that can be mild to severe. The severe form of the reaction is called anaphylaxis.

Where are nuts found?

Nuts can be found in **butters, pastes, and oils**. Nuts are also commonly added to baked goods, candy, cereals, and sauces. It is important to read the label when you buy a product to ensure there are no nuts added.

What foods are nut-free?

Foods that are almost always nut-free include **vegetables and fruits, meat and poultry, beans, seeds, and dairy products**.



Peanuts do not meet the definition of a real nut, and are considered to be a legumes like lentils. However, they do fall under the "nut" allergy category due to their protein structure.

Avoiding nuts in your diet

- Check the label of products to ensure there was no potential contamination or nuts added during the **manufacturing** process.
- Be mindful of **hidden sources** of nuts in the food you eat.
- Avoid foods that do not have an ingredient list.
- Have a **separate space** in the kitchen to prepare and store nut-free products.
- Know what to do if you accidentally eat nuts.

Cross-contamination

Even small amounts of nuts can cause an allergic reaction for those with nut allergies.

Cross-contamination is the transfer of an ingredient to a product that does not normally have it. Checking the "**May Contain**" warnings is a helpful way to avoid any cross contamination.

Cross-contamination can also happen during **food preparation** at home or in a restaurant. It can cause a food that should not contain nuts to become dangerous for those who are allergic.



Health Canada considers nuts to be a priority allergen. This means it is one of the foods that causes the majority of allergic reactions.

For more information on nut allergies, visit [Food Allergy Canada](https://www.foodallergy.ca)