

Allergies And Food Intolerances Not As Common As Believed

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LEESPORT (Berks Co.)—One out of three people believes he or she has a food allergy, yet only about one percent of adults suffer from a true food allergy," said Brenda Daelhousen.

She is a registered dietitian who led a workshop on food allergies and food intolerance at the Penn State Berks Extension office last week.

Food allergies can be life threatening. The most severe type of anaphylaxis, a reaction that can occur within moments after eating the offending food, and typically involves several parts of the body. Symptoms may include hives, difficulty breathing, and loss of consciousness. Without immediate medical attention, death may occur.

Foods that are more prone to cause anaphylaxis in some people are peanuts, nuts, eggs, and shellfish.

Daelhousen said that it is important to have symptoms evaluated and diagnosed by a board-certified allergist. Diagnosis is difficult. The only way to manage a true allergy is to eliminate the food from the diet. In that case, a registered dietitian is often needed to help manage a diet in order to ensure adequate nutrition.

Fortunately, most food allergies are not life threatening, but they may cause nasal congestion, asthma, nausea, diarrhea, and gas.

Even if those symptoms are evident, it doesn't prove you have a food allergy. Digestive and other physical conditions can mimic food allergy symptoms. An enzyme deficiency, such as when the body cannot digest lactose (a milk sugar) often produces symptoms of gas, cramps, and bloating, but this is not an allergy but a food intolerance.

Food intolerances are rarely life threatening. Special diets may be required.

Individuals allergic to gluten need to avoid all foods containing wheat, barley, rye, and oats.

Celiac disease is a genetic disorder in which the body cannot tolerate gliadin, the protein component of the gluten in wheat, barley, rye, and oats.

It is important to identify what grain is used when modified food starch is listed as an ingredient on the label.

Food additives are rarely linked with food intolerance reactions. In a few cases, a preservative sulfite is known to be dangerous for severe asthmatics.

Many people who believe they are allergic to dairy products are not.

That doesn't mean they don't have any unpleasant symptoms. They may be lactose intolerant.

"Lactose intolerance is caused by an inability to properly digest the natural sugar lactose, which is found in milk and milk products," said Daelhousen.

Although about one in four Americans suffer some degree of lactose intolerance, there are a lot of people who believe they are intolerant to dairy products who are not.

Studies show that most lactose intolerant individuals can consume small servings of dairy products without experiencing discomfort.

The following is suggested.

- Drink milk in servings of one cup or less.

- Try hard cheeses that are low in lactose, like cheddar.

- Drink milk with a meal or with other foods.

- Try yogurt with active cultures.

Substitute lactose-reduced dairy products, such as nonfat, low-fat, and calcium-fortified milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, and ice cream, for regular dairy products.

- Take lactase enzyme tablets before eating or with dairy products.

- Add lactase enzyme drops to regular milk.

Children with one allergic parent have about twice the risk of developing food allergy than children without allergic parents. If both parents are allergic, a child is about four times more likely to develop a food allergy than if neither parent is allergic.

Many children with food allergies also show sensitivities to inhaled allergens such as dust, cat and pollen or may develop allergies later in life. In addition, adults who develop food allergies often have histories of respiratory allergies such as allergic nasal symptoms or asthma.

Some of the following organizations can provide additional information on food allergies.

- The Food Allergy Network, 10400 Eaton Place, Suite 107, Fairfax, VA 22030-2208.

- The American Dietetic Association, 216 W. Jackson Boulevard, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606.

- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, Building 31, 7A-50, 31 Center Drive, MSC 2520, Bethesda, MD 20892-2520.

For more information about nutrition or for a referral to a registered dietitian in your area, call the Consumer Nutrition Hot Line at 1-800-366-1655.

The Southeast Dairy Association provides these recipes for those with lactose intolerance. Even if you do not have a food intolerance, you can enjoy these recipes.

ITALIAN STYLE LETTUCE WEDGES

2 cups plain yogurt
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
¼ cup finely chopped fresh parsley

2 teaspoons grated onion
1 clove garlic, crushed
½ teaspoon salt
8 iceberg lettuce wedges
8 piciberg stuffed olives

Combine yogurt, Parmesan cheese, parsley, onion, garlic, and salt for salad dressing. Spoon over lettuce wedges. Garnish each serving with an olive on a wooden pick.

MIXED FRUIT WITH CINNAMON YOGURT SAUCE

8-ounces vanilla-flavored yogurt
1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar

½ teaspoon cinnamon
Fresh pineapple wedges
Sliced fresh strawberries
Green seedless grapes
Fresh sliced peaches

Combine yogurt, sugar, and cinnamon. Chill, covered, 1 to 2 hours to allow flavors to blend. Mix fruit and chill until ready to serve. Serve about 2½ tablespoons sauce over 1 cup mixed fruit per person.

FLUFFY COTTAGE CHEESE PANCAKES

3 eggs, separated
¼ cup cottage cheese (lactose-reduced, if available)
¼ cup milk (lactose-reduced)
¼ cup all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt

Beat egg yolks until thick and lemon-colored. Add cottage cheese; beat until almost smooth. Blend in milk, flour, and salt. Beat egg whites until soft peaks form, fold into batter. Let batter stand 5 minutes. Using a ¼-cup measure, pour batter onto hot lightly buttered griddle. Turn when tops are covered with bubbles and edges look cooked. Turn only once. Serve at once with butter and jelly.

CHEESE VEGETABLE CHOWDER

2 cups chopped cabbage
1 cup each onion slices, celery slices, frozen peas, and thin carrot slices

½ cup butter
16-ounce can cream-style corn
2½ cups milk (lactose-reduced)
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon thyme
¼ teaspoon pepper
2½ cups shredded Cheddar cheese

Saute cabbage, onion, celery, peas, and carrots in butter in 3-quart saucepan 8-10 minutes or until vegetables are tender, stirring frequently. Add corn, milk, and seasonings; heat over low temperature 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add cheese; stir until melted.



Brenda Daelhousen, a registered dietitian, answers questions about food allergies and food intolerances during a workshop held at the Penn State Berks Extension office.

Teas, Wreaths, Herbs, Memory Loss

DAUPHIN (Dauphin Co.) — Tea, wreaths, herbs and memory loss will be some of the topics at Penn State Cooperative Extension's Summer Awareness Day to be held on Tuesday, June 16 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Ag and Natural Resources Center, Dauphin. The all-day event will feature a lineup of local and national experts discussing topics of importance to today's living, plus a special luncheon. Country Market Nursery will be giving away door prizes and centerpieces.

Ellen Spector Platt, author of "The Ultimate Wreath Book" and noted lecturer at the 1998 International Flower Show at Disney World's Epcot Center, will be presenting "Living Wreaths; Useful and Beautiful." That's right - fresh, living, breathing botanical masterpieces, ideal for hanging on the summer patio, growing on a table top, or surrounding the punch bowl at your next summer party. Ellen will show you how to make wreaths that are both decorative and useful using living plants from your own gardens.

Katy Olinger has a rich history in the business of tea, having operated her own tea room in Millersburg for many years. Katy is an accomplished cook, gardener, and expert on mint and she will share her tips on how to grow, use, and dry this marvelous herb. You won't want to miss her program "Just a Touch of Mint."

Think you can't do stirfry? Then sit back and enjoy while

David Tang, Penn State Extension 4-H Agent and family chef, presents "Dad Does Healthy Working." Here is one father who creates some very delicious dishes using fresh vegetables and herbs. With an easy recipe and a few simple techniques, even a novice can turn out these healthy, nutritious meals.

Kathy Wolfe, local Master Gardener, worked at the National Herb Garden in Washington, DC. and over the years has gathered stacks of facts and folklore on the plants we call herbs. Before the days of Aspirin, Revlon and the Rite-Aid pharmacy, women depended on herbs to cure illnesses, color fabrics, and care for themselves, their families and their homes. In "Herbs Your Mother Knew," Kathy presents an entertaining look at the magical, flavorful and aromatic world of plants that have interested people all over the world for thousands of years.

Thanks for the memories. Do you have a favorite tea cup, saucer, plate or other antique

that has a special memory? If so, bring it along. You will have an opportunity to talk about your treasure and share its interesting history. There will be a display table for the pieces. You might want to bring an open box to showcase your treasure.

Memory loss and Alzheimer's affects not only the patient, but the entire family. What can we do if it strikes our family? And how do we cope with this disease? In "Alzheimer's: Caring for the Patient and Caregiver", Dr. Emily Matlin, Neurologist, will explore helpful techniques in dealing with this debilitating disease.

Cost for the day which includes luncheon, is \$15 per person. Registration deadline is June 5. Don't delay. You won't want to miss this fun-filled, exciting day. The Ag & Natural Resources Center is located on Route 225, two miles north of Dauphin. Directions, additional information and reservation forms are available by calling 921-8803 or 1-800-328-0058 and asking for Penn State Cooperative Extension.

