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# Is My Baby Having an Allergic Reaction? And What Parents Need to Know About Early Allergen Introduction

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Learn what allergic reactions look like, steps to take if your baby develops a food allergic reaction, and how to introduce allergens safely.

Here's what you'll learn in this article:

- What does a food allergy reaction look like?
- What are the most common symptoms of a food allergy reaction in babies?
- What should I do if my baby has an allergic reaction?
- How can I introduce allergens safely?

All babies are at risk for food allergies, so it's important to know the signs of a possible allergic reaction, the procedures to follow if your baby reacts to a food, and how you can introduce allergens safely.

## What does a food allergic reaction in children look like?

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Hives from a food allergic reaction are different from the red, itchy rash that eczema causes. [Learn more about the difference between a food allergic reaction and an eczema flare-up here.](#)



In babies and young children, hives and vomiting are the most common symptoms of a food allergic reaction.

**2. Mild/moderate symptoms** - Other mild to moderate symptoms of a food allergic reaction include swelling of the face, lips, and eyes. However, there are many different symptoms that your child can experience. A food allergy reaction could affect the skin, eyes, mouth, respiratory system, gastrointestinal system, or cardiovascular system.

### 3. Severe symptoms can include:

Symptoms of a severe food allergic reaction can include:

- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness of the throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Noisy breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Persistent coughing
- Wheezing
- Difficulty vocalizing



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- Diarrhea
- Feeling floppy (infants and young children only)

See our chart below to learn all the possible symptoms of a food allergy reaction.

## Food Allergy Reaction Symptoms

| Body Part   | Symptoms  |
|---|---|
|  Skin        | Redness, itching, hives, red bumps, swelling beneath skin   |
|  Eye       | Itching, tearing, redness, swelling around eyes   |
|  Breathing | Nasal congestion, itching, runny nose, sneezing, hoarseness, cough, shortness of breath, wheezing |
|  Mouth     | Swelling of lips, tongue, or palate, itching in the mouth   |
|  Stomach   | Nausea, colicky abdominal pain, reflex, vomiting, diarrhea  |
|  Heart     | Rapid heartbeat, low blood pressure, dizziness, fainting, loss of consciousness                   |

**4. When do reactions occur** - Symptoms of an allergic reaction usually occur seconds to minutes after someone eats a food that they are allergic to, and almost always occur within 2 hours.

**5. Every baby reacts differently** - Keep in mind that the same person can have varying symptoms from one food allergic reaction  next. So, it's impossible to predict what type of reaction a person will have each time they eat a food that they are allergic to.

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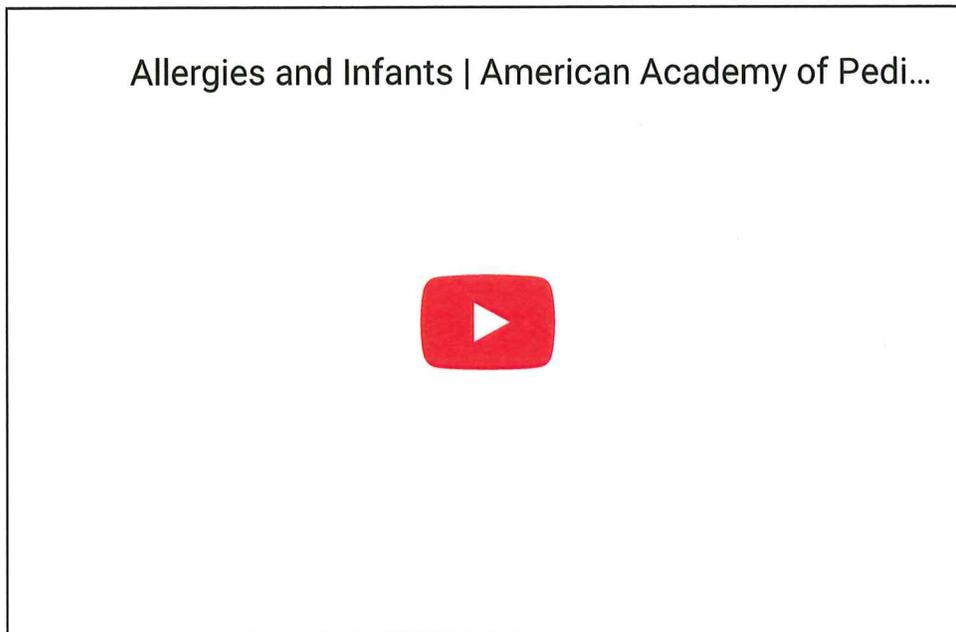
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When the symptoms of a food allergic reaction are severe, and involve more than one organ system, the reaction is classified as anaphylaxis. And anaphylaxis can be life-threatening.

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*Learn more about the signs of an allergic reaction from Dr. Shelly Flais of the American Academy of Pediatrics:*



## What should I do if my baby has an allergic reaction?

### If your baby shows *any* signs of an allergic reaction:

- Immediately stop feeding your baby the allergenic food.
- Seek medical advice.

### If your baby shows signs of a mild to moderate allergic reaction:

- Closely monitor your baby for signs of a severe allergic reaction. After all, a mild to moderate reaction could rapidly develop into anaphylaxis.
- Consult your pediatrician or a health care provider.

### If your baby shows signs of a severe allergic reaction/anaphylaxis:

- Lay baby flat in your arms.  Never hold them upright, and do not let them stand or walk.

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- Keep track of the exact time you used the auto-injector.
- It's extremely important that your baby receive epinephrine promptly, as epinephrine is the only medication that can stop anaphylaxis.
- Urgently call 911. State that your baby is having an anaphylactic reaction, and ask for an ambulance.
  - If you used an epinephrine auto-injector, let the ambulance staff know when you used it, and give the used auto-injector to the staff.

If your baby shows signs of anaphylaxis, immediately give epinephrine (an EpiPen or AuviQ) if available, and call 911.

State that your baby is having an anaphylactic reaction, and ask for an ambulance.

- Be aware that your baby may develop a second reaction after the first anaphylactic reaction.
  - This second reaction is known as a "biphasic" reaction.
  - A biphasic reaction occurs when symptoms improve, but then worsen, 4-24 hours after the first reaction.
  - If your baby develops a biphasic reaction, or if symptoms of the first reaction don't improve after your baby receives epinephrine, your baby will need a second dose of epinephrine from a second auto-injector. This is why it's important for parents of food allergic children to carry two epinephrine auto-injectors at all times.

**A Note about Benadryl:** *Please always consult your doctor first before using Benadryl.* Children's Zyrtec can be preferred over Benadryl since Benadryl is short-acting and can cause drowsiness or hyperactivity in some babies. Zyrtec can create more of a steady state with fewer side effects. Benadryl or Zyrtec is only recommended for infants who are having a mild reaction such as localized hives or redness. Benadryl or Zyrtec will not stop anaphylaxis from happening. Only epinephrine can stop anaphylaxis.

**Benadryl or Zyrtec will not stop anaphylaxis. Only epinephrine can stop anaphylaxis.**

**Again, Benadryl or Zyrtec is only recommended to treat mild reactions, and should only be used after a doctor recommends it.**



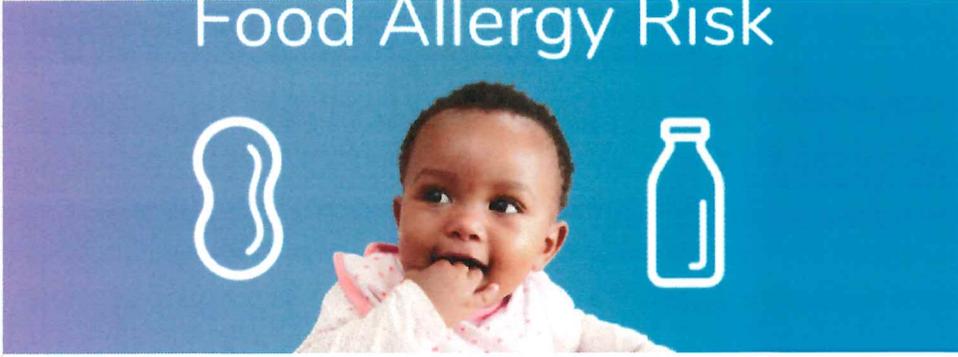
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## Food Allergy Risk



Take this quiz to learn your baby's unique food allergy risk score & get **10% off Ready, Set, Food!**, an allergist-mom developed system for introducing allergens early!

Start

## Infant Allergic Reactions: What Parents Need to Know

Recent landmark studies show that delaying the introduction of allergenic foods for a baby's first 1-3 years of life can actually *increase* their food allergy risk. Instead, introducing infants to common allergenic foods early and often, between 4-11 months of age, is recommended.

For maximum safety and efficacy when introducing allergenic foods, parents should follow these tips:

- When you're ready to introduce allergenic foods, choose a time when your baby is healthy.
- Make sure that an adult can closely monitor your baby for at least 2 hours, to watch for any signs of a reaction.
- Introduce one allergenic food at a time, as pediatric guidelines recommend. Wait 3-5 days in between introducing each new potentially allergenic food. That way, it will be easier to identify if your child has a reaction.
- Start with a smaller dose of each allergen and slowly increase the dosage. This gradual approach was used in some of the landmark studies.

## Introducing Allergens Safely with Ready. Set. Food!



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or formula, so you don't need to wait until your baby is ready for solids to start allergen introduction. Instead, you can start Ready. Set. Food! as early as 4 months of age, with any baby. And at this early age, reactions, if they do occur, are known to be mild.

- **Evidence-based dosing:** Ready. Set. Food! Stage 1 and 2 mix-ins uses the exact protein amounts used in the landmark clinical studies on early and sustained allergen introduction. None of these studies documented severe allergic reactions.
- **Gradual, gentle approach:** Our Stage 1 system starts with an ultra-low dose of each allergenic food, before slowly increasing to the amount used in the clinical trials. As a result, the initial allergen exposures are much gentler than what families typically feed their infants.
- **Sequential introduction:** Our Stage 1 mix-ins allow families to introduce one allergen at a time over several days, which follows AAP recommendations.
- **Avoids cross-contamination:** Ready. Set. Food! makes the preparation of allergenic foods for early allergen introduction much safer for siblings and parents with food allergies, by eliminating the risk of cross-contamination in the house. Our easy mix-in sachets being poured directly into a bottle limit exposure for a food allergic family member, far better than any alternative.
- **Recommended by medical professionals:** Over 1,000 pediatricians and allergists already recommend Ready. Set. Food!.

Ready. Set. Food! can help you introduce allergens safely to your baby!

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Caroline Weeks, RDN, LD, consultant dietitian who works with Ready....

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