

Allergy vs. Intolerance

What is an allergy?

An allergy is a response by the immune system to an allergen, which causes symptoms that occur immediately (within a few hours) and with every exposure to that allergen.

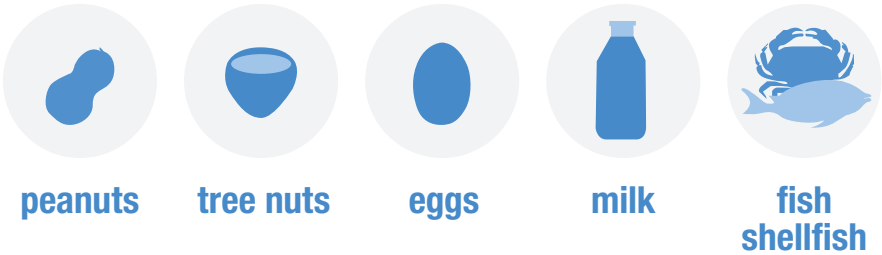


What are the signs I have an allergy to something?

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Hives | Vomiting |
| Swelling | Hypotension (passing out) |
| Difficulty breathing | Anaphylaxis |
| Difficulty swallowing | |



What are the most common types of allergies?



What is intolerance?

A non-immunologic response to a food that causes mainly gastrointestinal symptoms with exposure.



What are the signs I have intolerance to something?

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Not always reproducible | Heartburn |
| More subjective complaints | Vomiting |
| Not always immediate | Constipation |
| Bloating | Diarrhea |
| Gassiness | |



What are the most common intolerances?



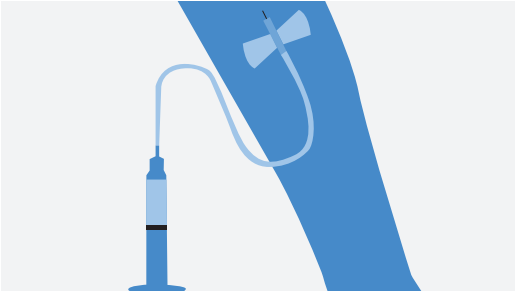
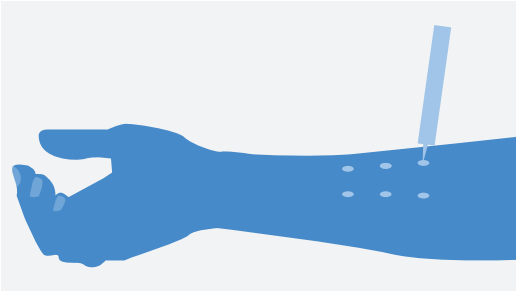
Questions to discuss when talking with your doctor

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. What do I think I'm allergic to? | | 4. How long did the symptoms last? |
| 2. What do the signs and symptoms look and feel like? | | 5. Need for treatment and what type of treatment |
| 3. How long did it take for symptoms to begin after I ate/encountered it? | | 6. Does this happen every time I eat/encounter it? |
| | | 7. When was the most recent reaction? |

How will a doctor test if I have an allergy?

The history is the most important part of the evaluation. Allergy testing may be indicated when the history suggests a possible food allergy. If the history does not suggest a food allergy, then testing may not be necessary.

1. Skin prick Testing
2. Serum specific IgE testing (blood sample?)
3. Oral food challenge



For more information about Nationwide Children's allergy and immunology clinics, visit [NationwideChildrens.org/allergy-immunology](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/allergy-immunology)

