




Guidance on avoiding nuts



**Children and
Young People's
Allergy Network
Scotland**

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Nut Allergy

If you are allergic to nuts, you should **avoid all** kinds of nuts unless a qualified Health Professional has told you that you can eat some types. In this case, eat them regularly and only when you can be absolutely sure there is no risk, they could be contaminated with the nut to which you are allergic.

Peanuts

Although it is commonly called a nut, the peanut is a member of the legume family (also called pulses), which includes beans, peas, and lentils. It is also known as ground nut, earth nut, monkey nut, goober, ground pea and pinder. Peanut oil is also known as arachis oil. Some people can be allergic to other legumes as well as peanut, but you do not need to start avoiding other pulses if you have not had a reaction to them before.

Tree Nuts

- Almond (also in frangipane and marzipan)
- Cashews
- Hazelnut (cob nuts, filbert, praline)
- Pecans (hickory nut)
- Pistachio nuts
- Walnuts
- Brazils
- Macadamia nuts (Queensland nut)

Avoiding nuts

Foods most likely to contain peanuts or tree nuts include:

- Nut butters or pastes e.g., peanut butter
- Breakfast cereals and cereal bars e.g., muesli, crunchy nut cornflakes
- Cakes, biscuits, pastries e.g., almond slice, chocolate chip cookies, bakewell tart, battenberg
- Desserts e.g., trifle, pecan pie
- Marzipan, praline, frangipane
- Ice cream e.g., pistachio
- Chocolate, sweets e.g., nut toffee, fruit and nut chocolate, nougat
- Italian food e.g., Romesco sauce, pesto (if made with cashew)
- Middle Eastern and Turkish food e.g., baklava and similar sweets/ pastries
- Indian cooking e.g., curries, Peshwari naan, sweets
- Chinese, Thai, Malaysia, Indonesian cooking e.g., satay, stir fries
- Vegetarian products e.g., veggie burgers, nut cutlet
- Salad and salad dressings e.g., Waldorf salad

Other foods

Some plants have the term “nut” in their name but are not true nuts. These include:

- Palm nuts/palm kernels
- Pine nuts/pine kernels
- Coconut
- Nutmeg
- Chestnut
- Shea nut
- Tiger nut

Sesame seed allergy is more common in children with peanut and/ or tree nut allergy. Allergy to other seeds however is much less common.

It is possible to have allergies to any of these, but it is not necessary for children to avoid these plants or seeds just because they have a nut allergy

Nut oils

REFINED peanut oil has had all the detectable peanut protein removed and therefore should not cause an allergic reaction in the vast majority of people with peanut allergy. Food businesses often advise you however to avoid eating their food if peanut oil has been used. However, avoid UNREFINED (cold pressed) peanut, walnut, or other nut oils.

Unrefined peanut oil is most likely to be used in ethnic food restaurants such as Indian, Thai, and Chinese restaurants or take-aways and may also be sold in the “speciality” or “gourmet” sections of supermarkets.

Some medicines e.g., Naseptin cream also contain peanut oil and again carry a warning that they are not for use in peanut allergic individuals.

Reading Food Labels

Since December 2014, manufacturers must highlight the presence of 14 allergens including peanuts and tree nuts. Allergens may be listed in **bold**, *italics* or underlined. Food businesses also must provide allergy information on foods sold loose without packaging.

Always check the ingredients list each time you buy as manufacturers may change their product ingredients without any indication on the packaging. The same brand of product made in a different country can have different ingredients.

Many foods are labelled “may contain traces of nuts” or have a similar precautionary allergy label such as “made in a factory where nuts are used” or “unsuitable for nut allergy sufferers”. These foods have been produced in a way that accidental contamination during the production process is possible, for example a production line that is used for both plain chocolate and nut containing chocolate. Manufacturers rarely specify which nut or nuts might be present and will often not even clarify whether it is peanut or a tree nut. Products produced in in-store supermarket bakeries may carry the same risk.

The risk of any nut being present is probably very low, and the amount of any nut contamination even if present may not be enough to trigger a reaction. The safest thing to do would be to avoid foods with any such precautionary allergy label but this is something to discuss with your allergy health professional.

Some companies now helpfully state on the label that they make products in a “nut free zone.”

For further information on food labelling please visit the [CYANS website](#).

Nut free product lists:

You can get lists of nut free foods directly from food manufacturers and supermarket chains or by downloading lists from their websites.

Cosmetics and creams which may contain nuts

Some personal care products such as soaps, moisturising creams and shampoos may contain nut oils. Creams containing nut oils applied to broken or inflamed skin may cause an allergic reaction. They are usually listed in the ingredients using the Latin name for the nut.

- Peanut: *Arachis oil / Arachis hypogaea*
- Sweet almond: *Prunus dulcis*
- Bitter almond: *Prunus amara*
- Brazil nut: *Bertholletia excelsa*
- Cashew nut: *Anacardium occidentale*
- Hazelnut: *Corylus rostrata / Corylus Americana or Corylus avellana*
- Macadamia nut: *Macadamia ternifolia*
- Walnut: *Juglans regia or Juglans nigra*
- Pistachio: *Pistacia vera*

Social Occasions

Eating out

Eating out is fun, and part of normal life. However, make sure that the meal does not include nuts, nut products or unrefined nut oil. A food business (café, restaurant etc) has to tell you about whether any food they sell contains nuts. It does not necessarily have to be printed on a menu, however. They can't just say “None of our food is suitable” or “This dish might have nuts in it”. Of course, the person taking your order, or your money may not be the best person to ask – if possible, talk to a manager, or even better, the chef!

Take particular care if eating Indian, Chinese, Thai, and other Asian cuisine, vegetarian meals, or buffet meals where spoons can be shared between nut free and nut containing plates.

Further information on eating out and takeaway food can be found on the [CYANS website](#).

Parties

Tell the host about your child's allergy before the day of the party but reassure them that your child can safely come as long as there are no nuts about. If this poses a problem for the host, offer to give your child biscuits, cakes, and sweets they can eat. Remember to check that the contents of party bags are suitable.

For further information on parties, please visit the [CYANS website](#).

School/ Nursery

School/nursery should be informed of your child's allergy, and they should have a copy of your allergy action plan, with the appropriate allergy medicines listed in your plan.

For more information on school/ nursery, please visit the [CYANS website](#).

Travel

Different countries have different food labelling laws. For example, in the US there is no requirement to highlight the word peanut (or any tree nut) in the ingredients.

Travelling is one of the most stressful situation for families with allergies, however, with some forward planning, there are various steps you can take to help make your journey as safe as possible.

For more information on travel, please visit the [CYANS website](#).