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*Nutrition for Health*



# EGG ALLERGY

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Eggs are among the eight foods identified as most common causes of food allergies in children. While most children outgrow an allergy to eggs before they start school, some continue to be sensitive and must avoid foods that contain egg or egg protein. Children with egg allergies may be advised by their pediatrician to also avoid egg-based MMR and flu vaccines.

**Allergic reactions vary:** An allergic reaction to eggs resembles that of other food allergies. The student may develop hives and swelling, stomach pain, respiratory symptoms like a stuffed or runny nose, or a rapid heartbeat. Students who are prone to anaphylactic reactions should either carry an auto-injector of epinephrine or keep one in the nurse's office.

**School breakfast and lunch should be carefully selected:** Unprocessed foods, namely fruits, vegetables, milk, yogurt, cheese, poultry, meats, fish, legumes, and nuts, do not contain egg. Eggs and egg derivatives are common in packaged and processed foods, particularly breakfast items, baked goods, mayonnaise, and batter-coated foods. Binders, coagulants, and emulsifiers often are made with egg. Food service personnel can check the package label and ingredient list, as labeling laws require that eggs and other common food allergens be highlighted.

## Common egg-containing foods and ingredients

- Baked goods
- Shiny baked goods, like breads, bagels, and pretzels
- Creamy salad dressings
- Mayonnaise
- Battered, fried foods
- Meringue
- Albumin (egg protein)
- Binders, emulsifiers and coagulants

An egg allergy is not considered a disability; as such, schools are not required by law to provide egg-free meals.

**Enlist parents as partners:** Parents can be an excellent source of support and information. Schools may want to ask all parents of kids with documented food allergies to provide a list of permitted and excluded foods. It may be easiest if parents pack lunch for a young student to reduce risk of egg consumption. They might need to send in separate snack or party foods since so many baked goods contain eggs, or request that the teacher advise other parents of foods on the permitted list.

*Ms. Hermann specializes in health communications for parents and children. Her articles have appeared in major health, women's, and parenting magazines and websites. She has worked with the Dannon Institute for the last ten years.*

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