

Fit Facts: Keep Picnics Fun with Food Allergy Prevention

Avoiding food allergens can be difficult at picnics because problem ingredients often turn up in unexpected places. You can help prevent serious consequences by strictly avoiding problem ingredients.

Here are a few examples where problem ingredients might appear in not-so obvious places:

- **Peanuts** – chili sauce, pesto, salad dressing and pudding
- **Tree nuts** – salad dressing, barbecue sauce, breading for fried chicken, meat-free burgers, pasta and pie crust
- **Soy** – canned tuna and peanut butter
- **Milk** – canned tuna or deli meat that has been sliced on the same machine as cheese
- **Wheat** – hot dogs, ice cream and imitation crab meat

Reading food labels carefully is the best way to avoid specific allergens.

Risk Reducers

The American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology recommends safeguards for preventing allergic reactions to foods at picnics:

- **Use condiment packs.** Providing individual-sized servings of mustard, ketchup, relish and mayonnaise can prevent cross-contamination that happens when large containers of condiments are used.
- **Pack foods separately.** When preparing foods for transport, pack allergic and non-allergic foods in separate containers.
- **Bring a clean tablecloth.** That can prevent contact with any allergy-causing food particles left on the table from previous picnics.
- **Use separate serving utensils for each food.** That helps reduce the risk for cross-contamination between foods. You should also make sure you have enough plates, eating utensils, napkins and cups for each person.
- **Pack disinfecting wipes and antibacterial gel.** Make sure all guests clean their faces and hands before and after eating.
- **Let allergic guests serve themselves first.** This can lower their risk of eating cross-contaminated foods.
- **Carry medications if you or your guests have allergies.** You'll need these emergency medications in case a reaction occurs.
- **Check mobile phone coverage.** If you head for the hills, try to find a picnic spot where your cell phone works in case you need to call for help due to a severe allergic reaction.

Sources: [American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology](#); [National Institute of Health](#)