

Peanut-Free Lunches and Snacks

A peanut allergy is a serious medical condition. An allergy to peanuts can cause a serious reaction called anaphylaxis and can be fatal.

WHEN GROCERY SHOPPING:

- Always read the ingredients list to determine whether or not a food contains an allergen.

- Ingredients often change without warning so read labels carefully every time you shop. A product that was safe last week may not be safe this week.
- If you have a question about a product, record the product name and the manufacturer's phone number or address. Contact the manufacturer and ask whether the product contains any peanut containing ingredients.

ALLERGY SAFE FOOD PREPARATION

- Wash your hands before preparing food.
- Clean and sanitize work and cooking surfaces, utensils and any equipment that touches food.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR ON LABELS

Health Canada requires food manufacturers to clearly label products if they contain one of the government's priority allergens—**peanuts** and **tree nuts** are among this list.

All priority allergens must be listed on the ingredient list of pre-packaged food, both domestic and imported, and must be clearly labeled (not hidden under another name).

Products with a "May contain" statement should also be avoided.

BE CAREFUL OF CROSS-CONTAMINATION

Safe food becomes unsafe through contact with peanut products. This is known as "cross-contamination." Cross-contamination is a common cause of anaphylactic reaction. Food residue on a utensil or transferred from a dirty hand can be all it takes to trigger a reaction.

Peanuts are not the same as other nuts because they are actually members of the legume family. Nuts such as pecans, walnuts and almonds are "tree" nuts. However, during food production and processing, peanuts and other nuts often come into contact. For instance the same equipment may be used for chopping both peanuts and walnuts in a factory.

Some children allergic to peanuts may also be allergic to tree nuts. For this reason, allergic children may be advised to avoid both peanuts and other nuts. You will likely be asked to avoid sending all types of nuts to school.

Remind your child to wash their hands before eating and not to share their lunch or trade foods with their classmates.

Nutritious and Safe Lunch and Snack Ideas

Even without peanut butter, school lunches and snacks can be healthy, safe and easy to make. There are still lots of quick and tasty choices for the child who loves and lives off peanut butter!

Use the chart below as a guide when packing lunches. Include foods from each category from Canada's Food Guide, plus a healthy drink, each day.

Vegetables and Fruit	Whole Grain Products	Protein Foods	Everyday Drinks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apple• Orange• Pear• Kiwi• Unsweetened canned fruit• Vegetable sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole wheat bread, bagel, bun• Dry cereal• Pita bread• Tortilla• Pasta• Brown Rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cheese• Yogurt• Cottage cheese• Chicken• Hard boiled egg• Chili• Pea or sunflower butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water• White milk• Plain fortified soy beverage

WHAT CAN I EAT FOR PROTEIN?

Don't be concerned that your child is not getting enough protein. Protein is found in many foods including all meat products, milk products and plant sources, like seeds, chickpeas and lentils.

The following foods have the same amount of protein as 2 tbsp of peanut butter:

- 1 oz (30 g) meat
- 3/4 cup (175 g) yogurt
- 1 cup milk or fortified soy beverage
- 1 large egg
- 1 oz (30 g) cheese
- 1/2 cup hummus
- 1 bagel
- 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 cup cottage cheese
- 1 cup cooked macaroni

EXAMPLES OF SOME HEALTHY LUNCHES:



- Chili
- Whole wheat roll
- Carrot sticks
- Plain milk



- Hummus and vegetables in a whole wheat wrap
- Vanilla yogurt and frozen berries
- Water



- Egg salad on a bagel
- Cherry tomatoes
- Unsweetened fruit cup
- Plain milk

If your child ate peanut butter for breakfast, have them wash their hands well with soap and water before leaving for school.

N-124 Revised April 2019