

**Hi, Stacy from Semi-Crunchy Mama here.** In this section we're going to talk about:

- the most common food allergens and when to introduce them
- the difference between an allergy and an intolerance
- the signs of a reaction and what to do about them

So what about allergies?

The top 8 allergens are: dairy, eggs, fish, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat, and they cause 90% of all allergic food reactions. Sesame, corn, and mustard seeds can also be common allergens.

Current research shows that in high risk populations, introducing eggs and peanuts earlier was correlated with lower rates of allergies. There was no difference for milk, sesame, fish, or wheat. Introducing eggs and peanuts early doesn't guarantee avoiding an allergy, and I still recommend waiting until 6 months for solids in general, but then at least you know. If your baby does react to eggs, make sure you mention it to your pediatrician as some vaccines contain egg proteins and your baby may need to skip that shot or see if there is an alternative.

Also, I've heard of parents feeding their baby a spoonful of peanut butter in the pediatrician's waiting room in case their baby reacts, but the problem is that you don't react to an allergen the first time you're exposed, it's usually the 4th-6th time. So when you see "diagnose my rash" posts on Facebook where people ask if you've used a new detergent or introduced new foods, that's generally not the issue. The tricky part is that if YOU are eating certain foods, your baby may have been exposed already, either via breastmilk (in the case of dairy) or even contact on their skin such as shellfish or peanut butter.

So what's an allergy versus an intolerance? An allergy is a immunoglobulin reaction in the blood which causes your body to view a certain compound as an invader.

An intolerance just means that your body doesn't process something well. Loose stools, vomiting, or diarrhea, runny nose, irritability and/or gassiness after a new food, or eczema can all be food-related. Most food reactions, particularly allergic ones, will happen within minutes or hours of eating that food. Intolerances can show up later since it takes longer to digest, and eczema can take a few days to flare.

For most foods, even a small amount can cause a severe reaction, so it doesn't matter if it's a smear or a tablespoon. Dairy in particular CAN be dose dependent, so your child may be fine eating a little cheese, but not drinking cow's milk, for example.

You have a list of signs allergic exposure in your handout, but just to go over it briefly, reactions include hives, swelling of the face, lips, or tongue, closure or tightening of the throat, or breathing issues after a meal. Hives themselves are just a symptom and are less worrisome if they're on the limbs and somewhat on the face. It's more concerning if they're on the chest since it could indicate inflammation near the throat and lungs, and breathing is a concern. If you see hives, watch them, perhaps call your doctor about Benadryl. If your child is swelling up, call 911. I know that sounds scary, but it's not statistically likely, and I want you to be prepared.

Next I'll cover other nutrition concerns I haven't addressed already.

*If you liked that class I would be honored if you recommend it to friends and family.  
Please do not share this content outside of your home. Thank you for your understanding!  
If you received this from someone else, you can [CLICK HERE](#) to purchase your own copy.*

