

Shellfish allergy

Shellfish allergy is a common food allergy. This type of food allergy may persist into adulthood. Children with a shellfish allergy need to avoid shellfish in their diet. You can avoid shellfish and still have a balanced, healthy diet.

Should my child avoid all types of seafood?

Some children have an allergy to shellfish and not to other fish. Other children may have a fish allergy, but tolerate shellfish. Ask your doctor about being tested for possible allergies to other seafood.

Avoid these foods:

- > prawn
- > crab
- > scampi
- > Moreton Bay bug
- > clam
- > scallop
- > calamari
- > shrimp
- > lobster
- > yabby
- > oyster
- > cockle
- > squid
- > crayfish
- > marron
- > cuttlefish
- > abalone
- > mussel
- > octopus

Check ingredient lists for shellfish

Shellfish may be used as an ingredient in some commercial food products. Always check the ingredient list on the food product label carefully. Check every time, even if you have bought that product before. The ingredient lists should be used as a guide only as food products can change. If you are not sure, check with the manufacturer or avoid the food.

Check these foods:

The following foods may contain shellfish.

- > fish stock
- > scampi fries
- > oyster sauce
- > pet or fish food
- > prawn chips
- > seafood pizza
- > marinara pasta sauce

Eating out

If your child has a food allergy there is no reason why you should not enjoy eating out with careful planning.

If your child needs emergency medication (eg an EpiPen) they should not eat out unless they have their medication with them.

Order simple dishes such as grilled meats without sauces, steamed vegetables and potato. Fresh fruit is a good option for dessert. Always check with the staff about the ingredients in the dish you want to order. If you are unsure about ingredients in a dish do not order it.

Cross contamination

Avoid using the same serving utensils, especially at salad bars and buffets where shellfish are present.

Prawns and other seafood are often cooked on barbeques. Cook your food separately on top of alfoil or a barbeque plate liner to avoid contamination.

Is shellfish allergy life long?

Shellfish allergy is likely to be life long, but there are a few children who out grow their shellfish allergy. As your child gets older, it is important to have regular check ups with the allergy doctor. The doctor will check if the shellfish allergy is still present.

What if my child has a severe reaction to shellfish?

Children who have had a severe immediate reaction (anaphylaxis) to shellfish with involvement of the respiratory and/or cardiovascular system should have a medical assessment and plan for follow up. The doctor will provide an action plan for the child's home, child care centre, and school detailing the symptoms of anaphylaxis and how this should be managed.

More information

- > Anaphylaxis Australia: www.allergyfacts.org.au
- > Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) website: www.allergy.org.au

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