

On the Table: Food Allergies

1. What is the difference between IgE- and non-IgE-mediated food reactions?

- IgE-mediated reactions are immediate hypersensitivity reactions. They range from mild manifestations to life-threatening anaphylaxis.
- Non-IgE-mediated reactions tend to be delayed, require higher levels of exposure, and typically do not progress on to life-threatening manifestations.

2. Which foods have been assigned as priority allergens in Canada?

- Cow's milk
- Hen's egg
- Soy
- Wheat
- Peanut
- Tree nut
- Fish and shellfish

Scheduled for presentation at the University of Toronto's **Primary Care Today** conference by **Peter Vadas**, MD, PhD, FRCPC, FACP (postponed)

3. How effective are prick skin tests in diagnosing food allergies?

Neither prick skin tests, nor in vitro tests alone will establish a diagnosis of food allergy. A positive skin test or blood test must be interpreted in the context of clinical reactions, as false positive tests are frequent.

4. What are some problems associated with dietary elimination?

- Food allergens hidden in packaged or prepared foods in the absence of adequate labelling.
- Absence of easily recognizable terminology on labels.

For an in-depth look at food allergies, please go to page 86.