

A Guide to Managing SOY ALLERGY



Soy is one of the most common food allergies worldwide. Soy allergy is more common in infants and young children than in older children, teenagers, and adults. About 0.4% of children in the U.S. have a soy allergy.¹

What Are Symptoms of a Soy Allergy?

When you have a soy allergy, you need to be aware of the symptoms of anaphylaxis. Symptoms of anaphylaxis may include hives, vomiting, or trouble breathing. The first-line and main treatment for anaphylaxis is injectable epinephrine.

Common signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in children, teens, and adults:

- Skin rash, itching, hives
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat
- Shortness of breath, trouble breathing, wheezing (whistling sound during breathing)
- Stomach pain, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Uterine cramps
- Feeling like something awful is about to happen

Common signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in infants and toddlers:²

- Skin rash, itching, hives
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat; ear pulling, scratching or putting fingers in ears; tongue thrusting or pulling
- Coughing, wheezing, hoarse cry, noisy breathing, chest or neck tugging, nostril flaring
- Stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, spitting up, hiccups
- Arching back, bringing knees to the chest
- Rubbing eyes, itchy or red eyes

Other signs and symptoms of a soy allergy may include:

- Blood in stools, especially in infants
- Loose stools, constipation
- Upset stomach, stomach cramps, bloating
- Failure to thrive (slow to grow or gain weight) or weight loss

How Can I Prevent Soy Allergy Reactions?

Foods that contain soy include ice creams, baked goods, plant-based or vegan meat alternatives, milk alternatives, and so much more.

The only way to avoid an allergic reaction is to remove soy completely from your child's diet. But you can successfully manage a soy allergy.

What you can do:

- Work with your doctor
- Read labels
- Be aware of cross-contact (when foods come into contact with each other and may transfer an allergen into a food that shouldn't have it)
- Communicate clearly with school staff, people who prepare your child's food, and babysitters and other caregivers

Reading Labels

By law, food companies must label their products clearly if they contain soy. The law requires companies to clearly name soy on the label.

When reading labels for soy, it may be in parentheses after an ingredient in the ingredient list. It could also be in a statement under the ingredient list. Sometimes it will be in **bold**.

For example:

- Yuba (soy)
- Contains: Soy

Sometimes soy may appear in **bold** print in the ingredient list too. To avoid soy in foods and other products, it helps to learn the different names of soy.

Some foods and products do not have to follow the allergy label law and may contain soy:

- Arts and crafts supplies
- Prescription and over-the-counter drugs
- Cosmetics and personal care items (such as, makeup, lotions, and soaps)
- Alcohol
- Toys
- Pet food
- Food served in restaurants, cafeterias, or by other food service providers

Most states in the U.S. do not have regulations regarding food allergies and restaurants. Ingredients in restaurant foods may vary. Cross-contact is also more likely. Look for places that have food allergy policies and allergy menus. Give the staff a chef card that alerts them to your allergy and lists soy.



If a food item does not have a label, you can't read it, or you have any doubts, don't eat it. Always read the entire label every time. Food companies may change their recipes.

Are Soy Oil and Soy Lecithin Safe for People with Soy Allergy?

Studies show that people with a soy allergy can eat highly refined soy oil because they have very small levels of soy protein. But people with soy allergy do need to avoid any expeller pressed, extruded, or cold-pressed soy oil. These types of oil do contain soy protein and must be listed on labels as an allergen.

Soy lecithin contains a small amount of soy protein, so products containing it will be labeled for soy. The amount of soy protein in soy lecithin is low enough that most people with a soy allergy won't react to it.³ Ask your allergist if your child needs need to avoid soy lecithin and soy oil.



Kids with Food Allergies has many resources to help you manage food allergies. Search our Safe Eats® Allergy-Friendly Recipes Collection of almost 1,500 member-submitted recipes at: kidswithfoodallergies.org/recipes

Does My Child Need to Avoid Foods Related to Soy?

Soy is a legume. The legume family includes different beans, including peanuts, peas, and lentils. But about 95% of people who have an allergy to one legume can tolerate and eat other legumes just fine.

References

1. Savage JH, Kaeding AJ, Matsui EC, Wood RA. The natural history of soy allergy. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*, 2010;125:683-86.
2. Pistiner, M., Mendez-Reyes, J. E., Eftekhari, S., Carver, M., Lieberman, J., Wang, J., & Camargo, C. A. (2021). Caregiver-reported presentation of severe food-induced allergic reactions in infants and toddlers. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaip.2020.11.005>
3. Food Allergy Research and Resource Program. Soybeans and Soy Lecithin. <http://farrp.unl.edu/resources/gi-fas/opinion-and-summaries/soy-lecithin>



Will My Child Outgrow Their Soy Allergy?

Most children outgrow their soy allergy by the age of 10.¹



Is There a Treatment for Soy Allergy?

Many allergists have been offering OIT treatment using foods in various forms, such as a liquid, flour, or the actual food itself. These methods are not approved by the FDA. Talk with your child's allergist about the most appropriate OIT option for your child. The FDA is looking at other food allergy treatments to fast track through the approval process to address this unmet need in the food allergy community.



Sign up for KFA's community to stay up to date on soy allergy news: kidswithfoodallergies.org/join



SOY INGREDIENT LIST



Soy can appear on food labels under many different names. To avoid soy in foods and other products, it helps to learn the different names of soy. If you see these ingredients on a label or menu, it means it contains soy protein and is not safe for someone with soy allergy. If the product is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the word “soy” must appear on the label.

Contains Soy

- Bean curd
- Edamame (soybeans in pods)
- Hydrolyzed soy protein
- Kinako (roasted soybean flour)
- Koya dofu (freeze dried tofu)
- Miso
- Natto
- Okara (soy pulp)
- Shoyu
- Soy albumin
- Soy cheese
- Soy concentrate
- Soy fiber
- Soy formula
- Soy grits
- Soy ice cream
- Soy milk
- Soy miso
- Soy nuts
- Soy nut butter
- Soy protein, soy protein concentrate, soy protein isolate
- Soy sauce
- Soy sprouts
- Soy yogurt
- Soya
- Soya flour

- Soybeans
- Soybean granules
- Soybean curd
- Soybean flour
- Soy lecithin*
- Soybean paste
- Supro
- Tamari
- Tempeh
- Teriyaki sauce
- Textured soy flour (TSF)
- Textured soy protein (TSP)
- Textured vegetable protein (TVP)
- Tofu
- Yaki-dofu (grilled tofu)
- Yuba (bean curd)

Soy Is Sometimes Found in

- Artificial flavoring
- Asian foods (such as Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, etc.)
- Baked goods
- Canned broths and soup
- Canned meat and fish
- Grains prepared with soy (such as cereals, breads, chips, crackers, pasta, rice, tortillas, rice)
- High protein energy foods
- Hydrolyzed plant protein

- Hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP)
- Infant formulas
- Lecithin*
- Low-fat peanut butter
- Natural flavoring
- Processed meats, sausages, and sauces
- Vegan, vegetarian, and plant-based foods
- Vegetable broth
- Vegetable gum
- Vegetable starch

However, if the food is regulated by the FDA, the word “soy” must appear on the label.

Should Be Safe

These soy derivatives should be safe for most people with soy allergy:

- Soy oil that is highly refined and distilled (but avoid cold pressed, expeller pressed, or extruded soybean oil)
- Vegetable oil derived from soy

Take Note

***Lecithin:** Foods that are covered by the FDA labeling laws and contain soy lecithin as an ingredient must be labeled to state that they contain soy.



For more information and other resources, please visit: kidswithfoodallergies.org/soy

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SOY ALLERGY Chef Cards

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When you eat out, use these chef cards to let the restaurant staff know how to help you avoid allergic reactions to soy.

I have a soy allergy!
I must avoid all foods that contain soy.

Contains Soy

Bean curd	Soy concentrate	Soybean curd
Hydrolyzed soy protein	Soy fiber	Soybean flour
Kinako	Soy formula	Soy lecithin
Koya dofu	Soy grits	Soybean paste
Miso	Soy miso	Supro
Natto	Soy nuts, nut butter	Tamari
Okara	Soy protein, protein concentrate,	Tempeh
Shoyu	protein isolate	Teriyaki sauce
Soy albumin	Soy sauce	Textured soy flour
Soy cheese, ice cream, milk, yogurt	Soy sprouts	Textured soy protein, vegetable protein
	Soya, soya flour	Tofu
	Soybeans, edamame	Yaki-dofu
	Soybean granules	Yuba

Soy Is Sometimes Found in

Artificial flavoring, natural flavoring	Grains	Processed meats, sausages, sauces
Asian foods	High protein foods	Vegan, vegetarian, plant-based foods
Baked goods	Hydrolyzed plant protein	Vegetable broth
Canned broths, soup	Hydrolyzed vegetable protein	Vegetable gum
Canned meat, fish	Infant formulas	Vegetable starch

Please check all foods for the ingredients on this card, including cooking oils, marinades, sauces, and seasonings. Use separate and clean utensils, equipment, surfaces, and gloves.

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CHEF: FOOD ALLERGY ALERT

I have food allergies!
In order for me to avoid an allergic reaction, I **must avoid** all food that contain:

<input type="checkbox"/> Milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Egg	Other Allergens: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Peanut	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Nuts	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Gluten	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sesame	<input type="checkbox"/> Soy	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish	_____

Before preparing my food, please take these steps to help keep me safe. I appreciate you!

- Read labels to look for the allergens listed on the front of this card. Please check all foods including cooking oils, marinades, sauces and seasonings.
- Please use separate and clean utensils, equipment and surfaces to prepare my meal.
- Wash hands with soapy water and change gloves.

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