African American Boys More Likely to Have Severe Food Allergies

August 6, 2011 By Rhonda Peters

A food allergy can occur in both children and adults of all ages and races. In fact, research shows that over 12 million Americans suffer with food allergies--2 to 4% are adults and 6 to 8% are children.[1,2] What's even more alarming is that of those 960,000 children with food allergies, African American boys are more than FOUR times likely to have moderate to severe food allergies in comparison to other races of children![3] Even worse than this statistic is the nightmare that parents have to deal with as they attempt to read food labels and decipher which foods are safe and which ingredients are derivatives of their child's allergen. FDA officials have even stated that the current warning labels "may not be protecting the health of allergic consumers." In a sense, African American parents are often playing a game of Russian roulette when they purchase ANY prepackaged food or beverage for their children.

In my opinion, reading food labels requires a chemistry degree because the ingredients that are in the foods are just ridiculous! So, for a parent who isn't knowledgeable nor has access to the internet or time to even research the ingredients, the child can be at a life-threatening risk.

What is a Food Allergy?
Food allergies develop when the body's immune system reacts to certain foods that are harmless. When this reaction occurs, the body produces antibodies to the food and releases various chemicals in the body, which triggers allergic reactions such as hives, nausea, swelling, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, etc.[4,5]

What is a Food Intolerance?
Food intolerances, unlike food allergies, do not involve the immune system; instead it is a food reaction in the digestive system.

What foods can cause an allergy?
There are many foods that could cause an allergic reaction, but only 8 of them account for over 90% of all food allergies.[1,2] These foods are dairy, soy, eggs, wheat, fish, shellfish, peanuts and tree nuts (such as almonds, cashews, etc.).

Can a person die from a food allergy?
According to the Center for Disease Control each year hundreds die from food allergies (about 150 deaths annually). Also, over 30,000 people receive life-saving treatment in emergency rooms due to food induced anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction).[5]

Is there a cure for food allergies?
Unfortunately, today there is no medicine to cure people with food allergies. The best prescription that many doctors give is for the person to avoid all food that they are allergic to. Some sources state that people can grow out of their allergies; however this is not always true for everyone.

How can I tell if my child or I have a food allergy?
You cannot look at someone to determine if he or she has a food allergy. Besides a person breaking out in immediate hives, swelling, difficulty breathing, etc., the first thing to do is to see your health care provider for consultation. He/she may require that you do a food allergy panel test either via saliva, finger prick or some other form of testing.

So, what's my story? I was diagnosed with food intolerances to casein (protein found in milk), eggs, soy, yeast, whey, and sesame at the age of thirty-two. Once I found out about my intolerances, I learned that many of these foods also triggered arthritic inflammation in my body. Consequently, I have completely removed all of these foods from my diet, and yes I can tell the difference in how I feel--much better and medication free!

[1]"Healthy Youth! Food Allergies." CDC. June 11, 2008 .

[2]"Food Allergy Information." Food Allergy Initiative. June 11, 2008 .

[3]"African American boys at risk for food allergies." KOAA.com. October 7, 2010.

[4]"What is a food allergy?" The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network. June 10, 2008 .

[5]"Allergies: Problem Foods: Is It an Allergy or Intolerance?" WebMD. June 10, 2008 .

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/blog/african-american-boys-more-lik