

# THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

Weekly Wellness & Safety Tips from Work Right NW



## ADVENTURES IN GOOD FOOD

BY FINESSA RASSEL, ATC, LAT

Most people enjoy a good meal, right? The way our sight, smell, and taste is triggered with an intricately-prepared recipe gives our palettes a great sensory adventure. However, for those with food allergies, the sense of *adventure* takes on a little different meaning.

**Food allergies** are defined as an immune reaction to proteins in certain foods. These reactions can range from irritating to deadly (anaphylaxis). Currently, there is no cure for a food allergy, and the only proven effective treatment is to avoid the food that triggers the response. The best defense against food allergic reactions is education and preparation. Here are some tips on how you can **[R] Review your Hazards** and stay **PREPARED!**



### THE TOP 9

What are these foods? While there are other foods or ingredients people can be allergic to, the most common food allergies are to the following products: milk, peanuts, eggs, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy, and sesame.

### READ IT BEFORE YOU EAT IT

**Always Pay Attention to the Food Label!** The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 mandates products disclose when major allergens are present on the food label. This is known as a "Contains" statement.

Some manufacturers also include separate statements on the label, including "May Contain," "Made on Shared Equipment," and "Produced in a Facility." Be aware when purchasing or consuming a product with known food allergies that the two aforementioned statements are voluntary and do not denote how much of the allergen is present.



### SYMPTOM WATCH

When faced with a potential food allergy after ingestion, early symptoms can include: hives; flushed skin or rashes; tingling or itchy sensations in the mouth; face, tongue, or lip swelling; vomiting and/or diarrhea; abdominal cramps; coughing or wheezing; dizziness and/or lightheadedness; swelling of the vocal cords or throat; difficulty breathing; or loss of consciousness.

**If you suspect a food allergy...** See a qualified medical professional. Self-diagnosing can lead to unnecessary dietary restrictions and deficiencies. They can also prescribe appropriate medication (e.g. epinephrine) and instruct you on how to properly use it.

**If you have a known food allergy...** Have an action plan! The recent **Emergency PREPAREDness 101** Digest article promotes how you can be ready in an emergency. An allergic reaction to food certainly qualifies! Re-reference that article as needed and develop your own emergency action plan (EAP)! You should also have at least two doses of epinephrine on-hand. Set electronic reminders of when your injector expires and when to renew your prescription.

### MEAL TIME PREPARED

Preparing an at-home meal for someone with a food allergy? Avoid cross contamination cooking at home by using different utensils to prepare food for the allergic person. Also ensure all dishes are thoroughly washed in hot soapy water between uses.

Or perhaps you're dining out with an allergy? A Chef's Card is a great way to communicate with restaurant staff which foods you must avoid. You can access a free template [here](#).



Ensure those food adventures stay safe and recognize those hazards. Bon appétit! 



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**Work Right NW** is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.

