

Whether an Allergy or Intolerance, Avoid the Food

**Tammy Roberts, MS, RD, LD
Nutrition and Health Education Specialist*

It is estimated that one of every four households in the United States make adjustments in food habits due to food sensitivities.

It is important to note the difference between a food allergy and a food intolerance. A food allergy is a response by the immune system when it does not recognize a food ingredient which is usually the protein of the food. The body works to get rid of the “invader” by producing destructive chemicals. It is those chemicals that cause the rash, watery eyes, swelling, runny nose and other symptoms people have with allergies.



A food intolerance can produce similar symptoms to that of a food allergy but the immune system is not involved. Generally, the response is in the gastrointestinal tract. Often, those symptoms include gas, bloating, abdominal pain and diarrhea.

Eight foods cause 90% of allergic reactions. Those foods are milk, eggs, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. Children tend to be allergic to the first five on the list and adults have more reactions to the last four on the list. Four to six percent of children have food allergies while only 1-2% of adults have them. That is because children often outgrow their allergies. Allergies to fish, shellfish, peanuts or tree nuts are often a lifetime affliction.

Whether the reaction is a food intolerance or a food allergy, the treatment is the same. –Avoid the food! Read labels carefully to make sure your allergen is not present. Always ask restaurants about the content of the foods they prepare.



Quick Answer

Does bladder capacity decrease with age, which leads to frequent urination?

Yes. The muscle of the bladder loses elasticity and tone. Hence, the bladder holds almost 50% less urine (causing more frequent urination) and empties less completely. The warning period between the urge and actual urination is shortened or lost as one ages. Muscular disability, spinal cord effects on the bladder muscle, tumors, infection, anatomic damage to the sphincters and/or bladder neck may cause incontinence in advancing age. Other risks for incontinence in old age include chronic disease, cognitive impairment, medications, smoking, pelvic muscle weakness, low fluid intake, and environment.

(Source: Linda Breyspraak, Ph.D., Center on Aging Studies, University of Missouri-Kansas City)



Creative Living is written by University of Missouri Extension Regional Specialists for seniors in English and Spanish. This newsletter is a partnership among the Guadalupe Center, Alzheimer's Association, and University of Missouri Extension. If you have any suggestions for its content, please contact Nina Chen, Ph.D., Human Development Specialist, 816-252-5051.

****Spanish translation provided by Kelly Loeb through Support of Alzheimer's Association.***