

All About Food Allergens:

Wheat



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What are the symptoms of a wheat allergy?

Symptoms of a wheat allergy can range from mild to severe and affect many areas of the body, including the skin, stomach and lungs. Mild symptoms of a wheat allergy can include hives or reddish, swollen, itchy bumps on the skin; itchy mouth; nausea or vomiting; stomach pain; sneezing; an odd taste in the mouth; and a dry cough. More severe symptoms include swelling of the lips, tongue or throat; difficulty swallowing and breathing; loss of consciousness; chest pain; and anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a condition that occurs when an allergy affects many areas of the body. Some signs of anaphylaxis include tightening of airways, a swollen throat, a severe drop in blood pressure, rapid pulse and dizziness or even loss of consciousness. If not treated quickly, anaphylaxis can lead to death.

What ingredients/foods should I avoid if I am allergic to wheat?

Wheat is found in many foods, and wheat-containing ingredients have many names, including: durum, wheat flour, pasta, cereal extract, couscous, farina, gluten, hydrolyzed wheat protein, malt, semolina, vital wheat gluten, wheat berries, wheat germ, wheat grass, wheat protein isolate and wheat starch. Foods that may contain these ingredients include breakfast cereals, breads, candy, crackers, processed meat, ale/beer, salad dressings, soy sauces and soups.

Look for the allergen statement "Contains wheat" in the ingredients section of the food package label.

Wheat may be found in unexpected foods, such as ice cream, marinara sauce, turkey patties, hot dogs, crab meat and salad dressings. Always read ingredient labels before eating foods you have not prepared yourself. Look for the allergen statement.

How much of a wheat allergen can cause a reaction?

The amount of wheat allergen needed to cause a reaction depends on the person and severity of the allergy.

How soon will a reaction occur after consuming the food containing wheat?

Reactions often begin within a few minutes of the food being eaten, but symptoms may not appear for two or more hours. In rare cases, the reaction may be delayed up to four hours.

What are businesses/food manufacturers doing to avoid reactions?

A packaged food product sold in the U.S. that contains wheat as an ingredient must inform the consumer. The word "wheat" must be listed on the label, according to the federal Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA).

What is the best treatment for a severe reaction to a food allergy?

Severe reactions require immediate medical intervention, so call 911. Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis, a rare but severe whole-body allergic reaction that causes severe symptoms, including tightening of the airway. After a food allergy diagnosis is made, your allergist likely will prescribe an epinephrine auto-injector and teach you how to use it.

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Recipes

Note: Be sure to check the ingredient statements on food package labels to avoid allergens in these recipes.

Key to abbreviations:

c. = cup	g = gram
Tbsp. = tablespoon	mg = milligram
tsp. = teaspoon	oz. = ounce



Honey-Peanut Cereal Bars (Wheat-free)

- ¼ c. sugar, granulated
- ½ c. honey
- ½ c. peanut butter
- 3 c. wheat-free cereal
(Cheerios, Rice Chex, etc.)
- ½ c. salted peanuts

In a 3-quart saucepan, over medium heat, heat sugar and honey just to boiling, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Stir in peanut butter until smooth. Stir in cereal and peanuts until evenly coated. Press evenly in 9- by 9-inch buttered pan, using the buttered back of a spoon. Cool one hour. Cut into four rows by three rows. Store loosely covered.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 180 calories, 9 g fat, 5 g protein, 25 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 130 milligrams sodium.

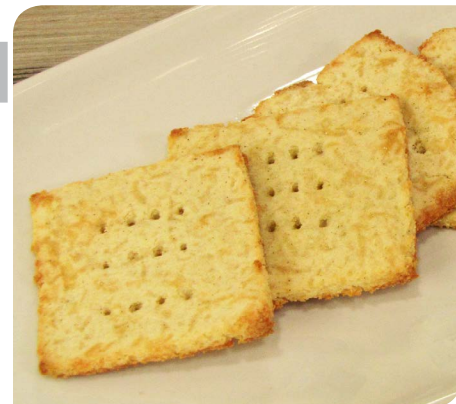


Macaroni and Cheese (Wheat-free)

- 8 oz. wheat-free pasta
- 2 Tbsp. salted butter
- 2 Tbsp. gluten-free flour blend
- 1⅓ c. fat-free milk, set out at room temperature for at least 10 minutes
- 1½ c. shredded cheese (processed American cheese melts best)
- dash of salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder

Set water to boil and prepare pasta as box instructs, cooking until al dente or a little firm; drain. Melt butter over medium heat in a saucepan big enough to hold the pasta. When butter is melted, add flour and cook, stirring constantly, one to two minutes. Slowly pour in milk, stirring the whole time. Continue to stir, scraping the bottom of the pan, until sauce has thickened, from four to eight minutes. Add cheese and stir to melt. Add seasonings to taste. Add pasta to sauce and stir to combine.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 360 calories, 23 g fat, 14 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 430 mg sodium.



Garlic Cheese Crackers (Wheat-free)

- 3 Tbsp. coconut flour*
- ⅛ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- ⅛ tsp. baking powder
- 2 Tbsp. butter, soft
- ½ c. mozzarella cheese, part-skim
- ¼ c. cold water

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Mix the coconut flour, salt, garlic powder, oregano and baking powder. Mix in the butter and blend by hand or in a food processor. Add the cheese and water until a dough forms. Lay the dough between two sheets of parchment paper and roll out with a rolling pin to about ¼ inch thick (thinner if you want it crispier). Cut into squares and poke with a fork. Place the bottom sheet of parchment paper with the cracker biscuits on it on a baking tray. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden and firm.

Makes four servings of three crackers. Each serving has 100 calories, 7 g fat, 5 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 240 mg sodium.

*Note: Coconut flour may be found in the specialty foods aisle in some grocery stores or online.

More Information

Visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Information Center at www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/allergies-and-food-sensitivities.

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