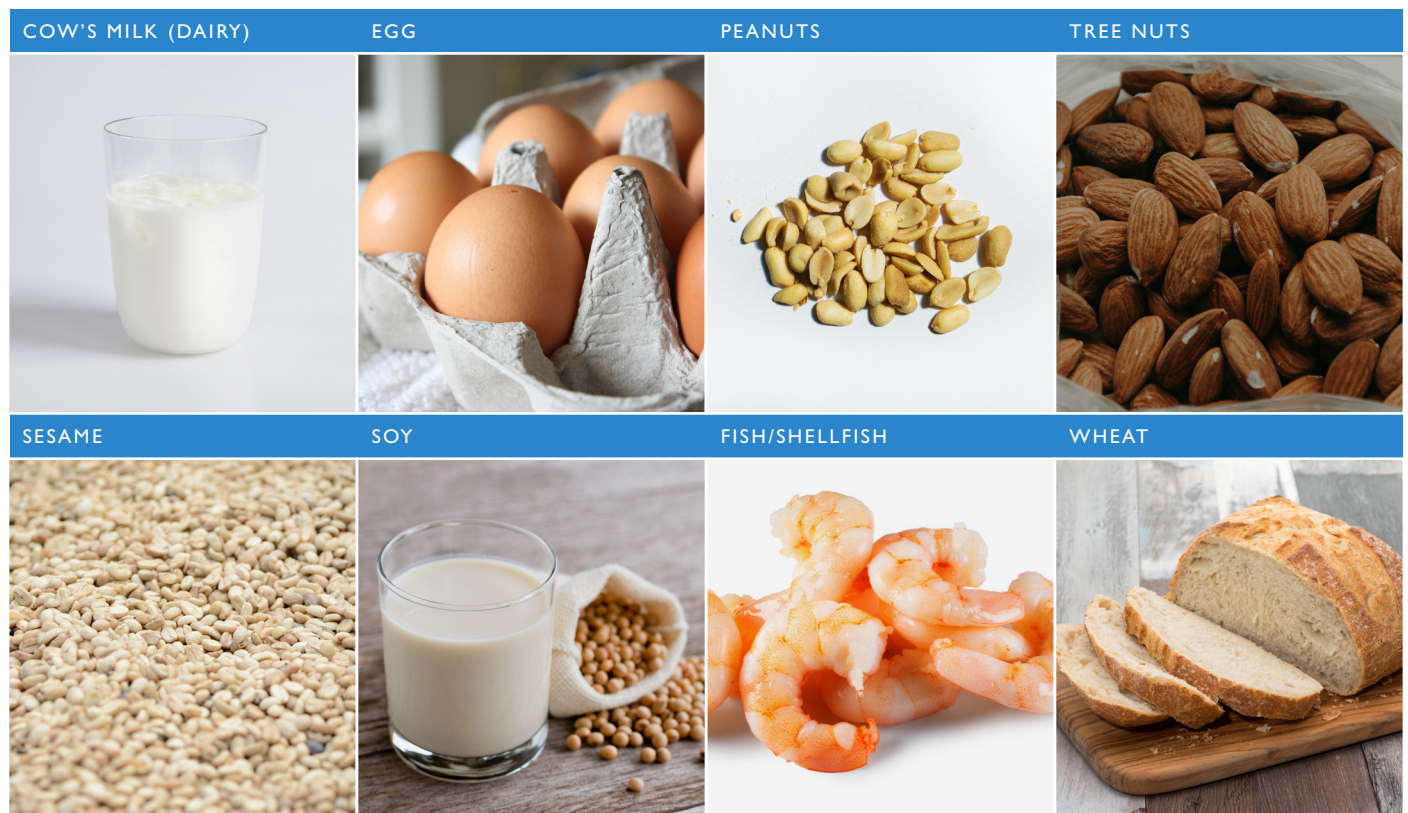


# GUIDE TO INTRODUCING ALLERGENS

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The latest health guidelines in Australia recommend all common allergens be introduced into your babies diet at around six months of age (not before four months), and when your baby is ready to help prevent food allergies.

Common food allergens include:



## WHY SHOULD ALLERGENS BE INTRODUCED AROUND 6 MONTHS OF AGE?

Research shows that giving your baby the common allergy causing foods before they are one year of age can greatly reduce the risk of them developing an allergy to that food. Delaying the introduction of the common allergy causing foods does not prevent food allergy.

A small number of babies will still develop food allergies even if the common allergy causing foods are fed to them before they are one year of age.

## HOW SHOULD I INTRODUCE ALLERGENS TO MY BABY??

Smearing food on your baby's skin will not help to identify possible food allergies, but you can rub a small amount of the food on the inside of your baby's lip as a starting point. If there is no reaction after a few minutes, you can start giving small amounts, as described below.

Introduce cooked egg (e.g. egg in muffins) and peanut butter in small amounts to start with. You can do this by mixing a small amount of hard-boiled egg or peanut paste (e.g. ¼ of a teaspoon) into your baby's usual food (e.g. rice cereal), and gradually increasing the amount by ½ teaspoon next time. If the food is tolerated, continue to give this food regularly as part of their diet.

It's best to introduce new allergen foods one at a time, around two days apart so you can easily identify if any foods cause a reaction. If a food causes a reaction, stop feeding your child that food.

Once an allergen has been introduced safely, it is very important to keep offering and serving it in your baby's foods at least twice a week to maintain tolerance.

Note: Children under 5 years of age should only be given peanuts or tree nuts as a smooth nut butter or paste or as nuts ground up to be a powder or flour.

## WHAT REACTIONS SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

Allergic reactions usually appear very quickly, so parents can gauge reaction within a couple of hours following the meal.

### SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS (ANAPHYLAXIS) TO FOODS INCLUDE:

- Difficult/noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling/tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking and/or a hoarse voice
- A wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Paleness and floppiness (in young children)

### MILD TO MODERATE SYMPTOMS OF FOOD ALLERGY INCLUDE:

- Swelling of the face, lips and/or eyes
- Hives or welts on skin
- Abdominal pain and/or vomiting

### LESS COMMON SYMPTOMS OF FOOD ALLERGY INCLUDE:

- Colic
- Reflux
- Eczema
- Chronic diarrhoea
- Poor weight gain

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY BABY HAS A REACTION?

Allergic reactions usually occur quickly, within minutes to two hours, while other reactions to foods may be delayed.

If any mild to moderate reactions occur, do not give any more of the food, observe your child's symptoms and seek advice from your baby's doctor. If your baby has what could be a severe allergic reaction, call an ambulance.

## MORE INFORMATION

- ASCIA infant feeding and allergy prevention: [allergy.org.au/patients/allergy-prevention](http://allergy.org.au/patients/allergy-prevention)
- Nip allergies in the Bub: [preventallergies.org.au](http://preventallergies.org.au)
- Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia: [allergyfacts.org.au](http://allergyfacts.org.au)
- Allergy New Zealand: [www.allergy.org.nz](http://www.allergy.org.nz)