UNDERSTANDING NUT ALLERGIES

A Practical Guide to Recognition, Prevention & Emergency Action

MEDICAL EMERGENCY REFERENCE



What is a Nut Allergy?

A nut allergy occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to specific proteins found in nuts. It is one of the most common food allergies and typically causes severe reactions. Unlike some childhood allergies, nut allergies are usually lifelong.

Tree Nuts vs. Peanuts

Peanuts: Legumes that grow underground (distinct from tree nuts).

- **Tree Nuts:** Almonds, Walnuts, Cashews, Pecans, Pistachios, Hazelnuts, Macadamia Nuts, Brazil Nuts.
- *Note: Being allergic to peanuts does not automatically mean an allergy to tree nuts, but evaluation by a specialist is required.*

RECOGNIZING REACTION SYMPTOMS

Mild to Moderate (Monitor

Severe Symptoms — (Emergency)

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOL (ANAPHYLAXIS)

1

Administer Epinephrine

Inject auto-injector (e.g., EpiPen®) immediately into the outer mid-thigh. Note the time of administration.

2

Call Emergency Services

Call 911 (or local emergency line) immediately. State clearly that an individual is experiencing anaphylaxis.

3

Position Correctly

Lay the person flat. If breathing is difficult, allow them to sit. Do not stand or walk. Turn on side if vomiting.

4

Second Dose if Needed

If symptoms do not improve or worsen after 5–15 minutes, administer a second epinephrine dose.

Strategy	Key Action Steps
Label Reading	Always check ingredient lists for nuts and warning labels such as "May contain tree nuts" or "Processed in a facility that handles peanuts."
Cross-Contamination	Use separate preparation areas, utensils, cutting boards, and cookware. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling foods.
Action Plan	Maintain an updated Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan signed by a physician in homes, schools, and workplaces.
Carrying Medication	Ensure individuals with known severe allergies carry two epinephrine auto-injectors at all times and that their expiration dates are checked regularly.