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DON'T LET ALLERGIES HINDER THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is just around the corner and, as we gather inside our warm houses, there are potential allergy triggers lurking inside.



Tis the Season to be Weary

Homemade items do not have ingredient lists and can be contaminated with trace amounts for of allergenic foods through contact with storage containers, kitchen utensils or baking sheets. Always ask about possible hidden ingredients. To prevent an allergic reaction to food during the holidays, you can:

- Inform the host about your food allergy and ask about the ingredients used to prepare each dish.
- Prepare with an auto-injectable dose of epinephrine when attending a holiday party where unrecognized food allergens could be hiding.
- Remind family members and friends that strict avoidance is important when managing food allergies and that even one little bite can be dangerous.

Can Evergreens Trigger Your Allergies?

Some people may feel that they are allergic to their Christmas trees, but the fact is, you may be allergic to microscopic mold spores found on evergreens that reproduce when brought indoors. These mold spores cause allergy symptoms like sneezing, an itchy nose and watery eyes. (To avoid mold, allow your tree to dry out in an enclosed porch or garage before bringing it indoors, while keeping the trunk in a bucket of water so it doesn't get dry.) You may also want to explore whether your tree retailer provides a shaking machine, which will physically remove some allergens from the tree. Best advice? Get an artificial tree.

The holidays can bring about other triggers that are not normally a part of your life. Remember the following tips this holiday season to avoid a serious allergic reaction:

- Take along your own pillow or an allergen-proof cover and request down-free pillows if staying in a hotel or at a relative's house. Dust mites can be especially troublesome if traveling away from home.
- Beware of the "Thanksgiving Effect," which consists of a flare-up of allergy or asthma symptoms that occur after an interval of being away from your family cat or dog. Some allergic people will actually lose their tolerance to their own pets during the period away from home.
- Avoid getting too stressed out from the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Stress levels can sometimes lead to an asthma attack because chemicals that are released by the body during times of stress can lead to tightening of the muscles around the air passages in the lungs. Deep breathing and relaxation can help.

8 Foods to Avoid That Account For 90% of Food Allergies

- Wheat
- Eggs
- Milk
- Soy
- Fish or Shellfish
- Legumes
- Peanuts
- Tree Nuts

