ifan.ie/ (Irish Food Allergy Network)

Learn to read food labels to check if a food contains nut or nut products. European Union (EU) and Irish law states that nut and ingredients made from nut must be listed on foods made in the EU, some products listing ‘almonds’ contain reconstituted and flavoured peanuts.

Learn to read the labels of medicine, cosmetics and skin cream.

**Nuts are listed as an ingredient on a label as:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Peanut includes** | **Tree nut includes** |
| Ground nuts | Cashew |
| Ground pea | Almond |
| Earth nuts | Brazil |
| Pinder | Hazelnut/Filbert/Cob nut/Noisette |
| Goober | Pistachio |
| Monkey nuts | Pecan/Hickory nut |
| Unrefined oils of peanut, arachis and groundnut. | Walnut |
|  | Macadamia/Queensland/Candle nut |
|  | Unrefined oils of any of the above |

**Peanut/nut allergies**

The following foods can cause problems for the peanut/nut allergic person when eating out and should be avoided unless they can positively confirm there is no peanut/nut protein present:

* baked goods (pastries, cakes, biscuits, etc.)
* Chinese and Thai dishes (even soup!)
* sauces (e.g chilli sauces)
* desserts
* toppings and gravy. Peanut sauce has also been used as a secret ingredient for marinating chicken.

**Avoid all nuts**

If you have a peanut allergy it’s safer to avoid all nut products. Sometimes peanuts will be stored near other nuts in the production line or processed with other nuts, and contamination may occur as a result of this practice. Tree-nut allergic individuals should avoid peanuts for the same reasons.

After checking the ingredients list, look on the label for phrases like these:

* "may contain nuts"
* "produced on shared equipment with nuts or peanuts"

***Can products with “may contain” statements be consumed by those with food allergies?***

It is not recommended, as this statement is there because the food manufacturer feels there could be a risk of contamination. Cross-contamination during food preparation, processing and packaging does occur and when a product is purchased the consumer has no real idea how great that risk may be. It is like “Russian Roulette”, maybe the package bought last week was fine but the product bought this week “may contain” the specified allergen. It is safest to heed the warning on the product.

**“May contain….” can really contain.**

*Can products with “may contain” statements be consumed by non allergic children in preschools and schools but still be around the children with food allergies?*

Severe reactions usually occur when an allergic individual has consumed the allergen. It is recommended that food allergic individuals totally avoid the food they are allergic to.

**It is reasonable for non allergic children to consume foods that “May contain…” around the allergic person as long as there is adult supervision and strategies are in place to minimise the risk of a reaction, e.g. a “no food sharing” rule, hand-washing after eating, etc.**

***How can I find out if an allergen is present in a product, flavour or spice?***

* Call the manufacturer and ask if the allergen is present in the product, flavour/spice for that product.
* If the manufacturer cannot answer your questions, you may have to avoid that product to be extra cautious about avoiding your allergen, particularly if there is a history of severe allergic reactions.