

Shellfish Allergies



Shellfish allergy results from a hypersensitivity of the immune system to the protein in shellfish. Symptoms occur within minutes of ingesting shellfish. Therefore shellfish must be avoided and you must carry an epipen.



Do I need to **avoid all shellfish**, even if I am only allergic to one shellfish?
It is important to avoid all shellfish, as there is risk for cross-contamination. There is also a high cross-reactivity between shellfish.

Do I have to **avoid finfish** too?
Unless you have had a previous reaction to fish you **do not need to avoid it**. Be careful of cross-contamination and **read labels** avoid products that say "may contain/or does contain" shellfish.

What are some common foods that **may contain shellfish**?
(Not a complete list)

- Stuffed mushrooms, other stuffed foods
- Salads
- Dips
- Ethnic foods
- Imitation crab meat (sometimes)
- Calcium (read label)

I used to be able to eat shellfish, **can shellfish allergies develop over time**?
- Yes.

Can I **outgrow my shellfish allergy**?
Unfortunately shellfish allergies tend to be lifelong. Therefore it is important to avoid shellfish all the time.

What are **different names for shellfish**?

(Not a complete list)

- Crab
- Crayfish (crawfish)
- Lobster (langouste)
- Coral
- Prawns
- Shrimp (crevette)
- Oyster
- Scallop
- Mussel
- Abalone
- Escargot
- Squid (calamari)
- Whelks
- Cockle (periwinkle, sea urchin)

Can I have a **reaction when shellfish is being cooked**?

- The protein can become airborne in steam or vapor from cooking, and has been known to cause allergic reactions
- You can **NOT** react from just the odor of shellfish