

Food Allergies

1. Food allergy is a response to a food triggered by our body's immune system. Common food allergens are food proteins which cause allergic reactions. Examples of food allergens are eggs, soybean, peanut, cow's milk, fish, tree nuts, crustacean products and gluten.
2. Food allergy can affect both children and adults. The typical symptoms of food allergy include itching in the mouth, swelling of the lips, face, tongue, diarrhoea and red itchy bumps. Some may experience severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, characterised by difficulty in breathing and a severe drop in blood pressure resulting in giddiness and/ or loss of consciousness. This reaction is life threatening if left untreated and would require immediate medical attention.
3. Common food allergens, like any other ingredients, are required to be declared under the statement of ingredients on the labels of pre-packed foods. This is to facilitate consumers making informed food choices. Food manufacturers may also highlight the presence of food allergens using additional statements e.g. "contains peanuts", as long as the ingredient is disclosed under the statement of ingredients.

About GOS

4. GOS is not well documented for causing food allergy and is unlike the classical food allergens which are proteins. Oligosaccharides resembling GOS can also be found naturally in human milk.
5. GOS has been evaluated to be safe for human consumption. Milk-based products with GOS have been on the market in Europe since 2000 and in Southeast Asia since 2007. Many countries including Australia, New Zealand, European Union, United States, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have approved the use of GOS in foods. It is estimated that worldwide, over 100 million infants and young children have consumed products containing GOS since its introduction in 2000.