

Cross-Allergy Food Guide

What is a Cross-Allergy?

A cross-allergy occurs when the immune system reacts to proteins in certain foods that resemble those found in pollen. This can cause allergic symptoms when eating those foods, especially for people already sensitive to pollen.

Common Cross-Allergy Triggers by Pollen Type:

Below is a list of common pollen types and the foods that may trigger reactions:

- Birch, Hazel, Alder Pollen: apples, pears, cherries, peaches, plums, carrots, celery, hazelnuts
- Grass and Grain Pollen: tomatoes, wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, legumes
- Wormwood Pollen: melons, grapes, bell pepper, parsley, fennel, celery, sunflower seeds
- Ambrosia (Ragweed) Pollen: banana, cucumber, zucchini, melon, salad greens

Symptoms of Cross-Allergy:

- Itching or swelling in the mouth, lips, or throat (oral allergy syndrome)
- Skin reactions: rashes, hives, red spots
- Nasal symptoms: sneezing, runny nose, congestion
- Rare: severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)

What Can You Do to Manage Cross-Allergies?

- Avoid raw versions of trigger foods (try cooking them)
- Choose well-tolerated varieties (e.g., specific apple types)
- Avoid alcohol and manage stress
- Keep an allergy diary and speak to your doctor
- Carry antihistamines or epinephrine if prescribed

Diagnosis and Treatment:

- Talk to an allergist
- Use food diaries, skin prick tests, or blood tests
- In some cases, allergy immunotherapy (desensitization) may help