



**Texas 4-H Youth  
Development Healthy  
Lifestyles Invitational**

## Food Allergies

Food allergies are caused by the immune system's reaction to specific proteins in food. When someone with a food allergy consumes the allergen, their immune system mistakenly identifies the protein as a threat, leading to a range of symptoms from mild to severe.

Reactions can vary widely. Mild symptoms might include itching, hives, or gastrointestinal discomfort, while severe reactions, such as anaphylaxis, can be life-threatening and require immediate medical attention. Anaphylaxis can cause the throat to swell, making breathing difficult, and may lead to a sudden drop in blood pressure.

As of now, there is no definitive cure for food allergies. Management primarily involves strict avoidance of the allergenic food. This requires vigilance in reading labels, understanding cross-contamination risks, and communicating with restaurants and food manufacturers.

The web pages below are the official Healthy Lifestyle Invitational Contest study resources. Classes will be developed based on information from these pages.

U. S. Food & Drug Administration

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/food-allergies>

U.S. Department of Agriculture

<https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/diet-and-health-conditions/food-allergies-and-intolerances>

Food Safety.gov

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/avoiding-food-allergy-reactions>