

Your guide to:

# Shellfish Allergies



Shellfish allergies result 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 epinephrine.

**Do I need to avoid all shellfish, even if I am only allergic to one shellfish?**

- Avoid cross reacting shellfish:
  - Crustaceans: Lobster, crab and shrimp
  - Bivalves: Oyster, scallop, clam and mussel
  - Cephalopods: Octopus, squid, cuttlefish

- Only eat other **NON**-cross-reacting shellfish if there is **NO** cross-contamination, if you are unsure about cross contamination avoid it.

**Do I have to avoid finfish too?**

- Fish and Shellfish are different
- Unless you also have a fish allergy 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.

**What are different names for shellfish? (Not a complete list)**

- **Crustaceans** :Crab, Lobster (langouste), Crayfish (crawfish), Prawns , Shrimp (crevette)
- **Bivalves**:Oyster, Scallop, Mussel, Clam Escargot (Snail), Whelk, Periwinkle, Cockle
- **Cephalopods**:Squid (calamari), Octopus, Cuttlefish

**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 but not full blown anaphylaxis.
- Once the shellfish is done cooking the allergen settles
- You can **NOT** react from just the odor of shellfish.

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