Food Allergens

USP Dietary Supplements Stakeholders Forum
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Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA)

(1) it is estimated that--
(A) approximately 2 percent of adults and about 5 percent of infants and young children in the United States suffer from food allergies; and
(B) each year, roughly 30,000 individuals require emergency room treatment and 150 individuals die because of allergic reactions to food;
Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA)

(A) eight major foods or food groups--milk, eggs, fish, Crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans--account for 90 percent of food allergies;
Allergens – Canada (8)

• Eggs.
• Milk.
• Mustard.
• Peanuts.
• Crustaceans and molluscs.
• Fish.
• Sesame seeds.
• Soy.
EFSA Allergens (14)

- Cereals containing gluten
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Peanuts
- Soybeans
- Milk
- Nuts
- Celery
- Mustard
- Sesame Seeds
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites
- Lupin
- Molluscs
The following are considered "tree nuts" for purposes of section 201(qq)

- Almond: Prunus dulcis (Rosaceae)
- Beech nut: Fagus spp. (Fagaceae)
- Brazil nut
- Butternut
- Cashew
- Chestnut (Chinese, American, European, Seguin)
- Chinquapin
- Coconut
- Filbert/hazelnut
- Ginko nut
- Hickory nut
- Lichee nut
- Macadamia nut/Bush nut
- Pine nut/Pinon nut
- Pecan
- Pili nut
- Pistachio
- Sheanut
- Walnut (English, Persian, Black, Japanese, California), Heartnut, Butternut
EFSA Defined Tree Nuts

- Hazelnut
- Walnut
- Almond
- Cashew nut
- Brazil nut
- Pecan nut
- Pistachio
- Chestnut
- Macadamia and Queensland nut
Health Canada Defines Tree Nuts

• Tree nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio nuts and walnuts)
FSANZ (Australia/NZ) Defines Tree Nuts

- Almonds
- Almond meal
- Almond paste
- Artificial nuts
- Beer nuts
- Brazil nuts
- Caponata
- Cashews
- Gianduja (nut mixture found in some chocolate)
- Hazelnuts/Filberts
- Hickory nuts
- Indian nuts (cashews)
- Macadamia nuts
- Macaroons
- Marzipan
- Natural nut extract
- Non-gai nuts/nan-gai nuts
- Nut flavoured alcoholic liqueurs and syrups
- Nut meat, nut meal
- Nut milks
- Nut oils
- Nut paste, butter or spreads
- Pecans/mashuga nuts
- Pine nuts
- Pistachios
- Pralines
- Walnuts
American College of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology

• “Coconut is not a botanical nut; it is classified as a fruit, even though the Food and Drug Administration recognizes coconut as a tree nut. While allergic reactions to coconut have been documented, most people who are allergic to tree nuts can safely eat coconut.”
Allergic reactions to peanut and tree nuts are relatively common. In contrast, allergic reactions to coconut are relatively rare. Few cases of allergic reactions from eating coconut products have been reported, including one case of severe stomach upset in a baby fed infant formula containing coconut. The other cases reported have been those of serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis). Of these cases, some have been found to be allergic to tree nuts like walnut and hazelnut, as well as coconut. Allergic responses have been found to similar proteins present in both types of foods, a concept known as cross-reactivity. Other cases have only been allergic to coconut.
Coconut is a very different plant from peanut or tree nuts. The presence of the letters "nut" does not mean that coconut will trigger an allergic reaction in people allergic to peanut or tree nuts. Allergies to peanut and tree nuts are relatively common compared to allergies to coconut which are very rare. This suggests that the risk of coconut allergy in a person known to be allergic to peanut or tree nuts is very low. Therefore allergy testing to coconut is not considered as routine.
Should people with tree nut allergy avoid coconut?

- Tree nuts include almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, cashew nuts and pistachios. People who are allergic to tree nuts sometimes ask us if they are likely to react to coconut because of the name. Foods that are close biological relatives often share similar proteins, which can lead to a process called cross-reactivity – where a person allergic to one food also reacts to another. But the coconut is a member of the palm family and only distantly related to tree nuts. The botanical distance between coconuts and tree nuts would suggest that people with tree nut allergy should be able to tolerate coconut and studies have shown that this is generally true. Therefore there is no general recommendation that patients with tree nut allergy should avoid coconut.
Considering Coconut a “Tree nut”

- Dilutes the message and is confusing for consumers
- The number of dietary supplement products containing coconut derived material makes maintaining an allergen control program burdensome.
Thank you