

Around 6% of the UK adult population have a food allergy, new report from the Food Standards Agency finds

The PAFA project found that more than 30% of adults reported some types of adverse reactions when eating food - meaning they had an illness or trouble when eating a particular food. When this was investigated further through a clinical assessment, it was found that around 6% of the UK adult population are estimated to have a clinically confirmed food allergy. This equates to around 2.4 million adults in the UK.

The research also found that for UK adults:

- foods such as peanuts and tree nuts like hazelnuts, walnuts and almonds, are most likely to cause an allergic reaction
- many individuals also had allergies to fresh fruits such as apple, peach and kiwi fruit. These were associated with allergies to birch pollen, also known as pollen-food allergy syndrome or oral allergy syndrome
- allergies to foods like milk, fish, shrimp and mussels were uncommon
- childhood food allergies persist into early adulthood, and then further increase with around half of food allergies developing in later adulthood

The PAFA report is significant in helping us identify how food allergies evolve between childhood and adulthood, as well as providing vital insights into links between certain types of foods and the persistence of allergies into adulthood.

Through this research, we can see patterns such as the emergence of plant-based allergies affecting more people into adulthood which is important for us to consider as we've seen the food system move towards plant-based diets and alternative proteins.

The Food Standards Agency remains committed to ensuring that consumers have clear and accurate allergen labelling to support people in the UK living with a food allergy. This report will help guide our future work on allergens to ensure everyone can enjoy food that is safe.

Professor Robin May, Chief Scientific Advisor at the Food Standards Agency.

Read the full [Patterns and Prevalence of Adult Food Allergy report](#).