

The Buzz



Food Allergies

Food allergies are a growing public health concern, affecting millions of people. A food allergy occurs when the body's immune system reacts to a specific food protein as if it were a harmful substance, triggering a range of symptoms that can vary from mild to life-threatening.

According to a 2022 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately **1 in 5 children** in the U.S. had a food allergy, eczema, or another skin allergy in 2021. About 6% of U.S. children were specifically reported to have food allergies, with higher rates among non-Hispanic Black children and boys. These numbers highlight the increasing prevalence and disparities in allergy-related health outcomes ([CDC, 2022](#)).

The most common food allergens include:

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts
- Milk
- Eggs
- Wheat
- Soy
- Shellfish

Symptoms can appear within minutes to a few hours after eat-

ing the offending food. Symptoms may include:

- Hives or rash
- Swelling of lips, face, or throat
- Stomach pain, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Trouble breathing
- Dizziness or fainting

In severe cases, anaphylaxis—a life-threatening reaction—can occur and requires immediate treatment with epinephrine ([NIH, Cleveland Clinic](#)).

Food allergies are diagnosed through a combination of:

- Detailed medical history
- Skin prick tests
- Blood tests for allergen-specific IgE

Once diagnosed, the only proven way to prevent reactions is strict avoidance of the allergen. Individuals with severe allergies should carry **epinephrine auto-injectors** and have an **emergency action plan** ([Cleveland Clinic](#)).

Research, including the NIH-supported LEAP study, suggests that introducing certain allergenic foods like peanuts early in life may actually help prevent the development of allergies in high-risk infants.

Based on these findings, pediatricians may recommend early introduction of peanut-containing foods between 4–6 months of age.

Living with food allergies requires constant vigilance.

- Reading ingredient labels carefully
- Asking about food preparation in restaurants
- Wearing medical ID jewelry
- Educating family, friends, schools, and caregivers
- Staying up to date with an allergist or primary care provider

Food allergies are more than an inconvenience—they can be serious and even deadly. Fortunately, greater awareness, improved diagnosis, promising treatments, and informed prevention strategies are helping individuals and families manage them more effectively. If you suspect a food allergy, consult a healthcare provider to discuss testing and safe practices.

Resources: [CDC, 2022](#), [Cleveland Clinic](#), [NIH News in Health](#),

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

DRAGONS & ADVENTURE WEEKEND AT THE CONNECTICUT RENAISSANCE FAIRE, SEPT 6-7

10:30AM-6PM LEBANON FAIRGROUNDS. **Unleash the adventurer within!** Celebrate all things epic at the 27th annual Connecticut Renaissance Faire's **Dragons & Adventure Weekend**. Whether you love fantasy, video game RPGs, tabletop quests, LARPing, or just a good old-fashioned costume contest, this weekend is packed with excitement. Bring your party, gear up, and step into a realm of dragons, monsters, and heroic fun!

CT Veterans Day Race. November 8-9 2025, @10am, Coventry, CT. Join us for the CT Veterans Day Race taking place on the weekend. This inspiring event offers participants a choice of a 4-mile race, a 3-mile walk, or a 3-mile Ruck, with both live and virtual options available to suit all preferences.

The Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD), through funding from the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funds, is addressing uncontrolled high blood pressure, a risk factor for strokes and heart attacks. Hypertension (high blood pressure) can be controlled through lifestyle choices and some people will need medications prescribed by their doctor. EHHD is offering educational series throughout the district with a free at-home blood pressure monitor as part of the series. For more information go to the EHHD [Hot Topics page](#).



Sweet Potato Pancakes

INGREDIENTS ♦ 3 cups peeled and finely shredded sweet potatoes ♦ 1/2 cup finely chopped onions ♦ 1 tsp salt-free herb seasoning ♦ 3/4 cup unbleached flour ♦ 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley ♦ 1 cup finely shredded zucchini ♦ 2T lemon juice ♦ 3/4 cups egg substitute ♦ 3 tsp canola oil, divided

DIRECTIONS 1. In a large bowl, mix the sweet potatoes, zucchini, onions, lemon juice, herb blend, egg, flour, and parsley. 2. In a large no-stick frying pan or griddle over medium-high heat, warm 2 tsp of the oil. Drop a large Tbsp of the batter into the pan and spread it with a spatula to form a thin pancake. Add more batter to fill the pan without crowding the pancakes. 3. Cook for about 2 minutes per side, or until golden and crispy. Remove from the pan and keep warm. Repeat, adding the remaining oil as needed, until all the batter has been used.



Hearing Loss Can Impact Brain Health

Research shows that treating hearing loss isn't only about restoring sound—it can also protect your brain. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded a clinical trial that found that older adults who received treatment for hearing loss experienced **48% less decline in thinking and memory skills over three years** compared to those who didn't ([NIH](#)).

Why does this matter? Untreated hearing impairment forces the brain to strain harder to interpret sound, which may divert essential cognitive resources. Over time, this extra effort, combined with reduced social interaction due to communication difficulties, can speed up cognitive decline.

Common signs of hearing loss are:

Thinking others are mumbling, turning up the volume on the TV or radio, & trouble understanding people because of background noise.

However, new over-the-counter hearing aids—now available without a prescription—are making treatment easier and more affordable. They're especially helpful for mild to moderate hearing loss, paving the way for earlier intervention ([NIH](#)).

Bottom line:

- **Early detection and treatment** of hearing loss can significantly slow down cognitive decline.
- **Accessible solutions**, including OTC hearing aids, now offer an easier path to maintaining both auditory and brain health.



By addressing hearing loss early, you're not just improving your ability to interact—you're

giving your brain a better chance to stay sharp.

Investing in your hearing is a powerful way to **support long-term cognitive resilience**.

Sources: [NIH New in Health](#), & [NIH Hearing](#)

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

