



What's the deal with tree nuts if you have a peanut allergy?

This question comes up often when you have a peanut allergy. A peanut is a legume and not a tree nut despite “nut” in the name. Some people can be allergic to both tree nuts and peanuts. I am only allergic to peanuts. However, when I eat away from home I avoid both peanuts and tree nuts due to cross contamination.

The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) encourages those with peanut allergy to discuss tree nuts with their primary care doctor or allergist, www.foodallergy.org/page/peanut-allergy.

None of my doctors have discussed this with me over the years. It is likely that you will need to bring this question up with your health care provider if you have a peanut allergy.

Let me tell you what the deal is with tree nuts from my perspective. The majority of tree nuts available in the marketplace are either potentially cross contaminated with peanuts or are cooked in peanut oil (which I avoid).

Planters is a great example of this. They have many tree nut products including almonds and cashews but right on their labels many of the products state in the ingredients-peanut and/or cottonseed oil. There is also a statement that they are produced on equipment that processes peanut or other tree nuts.

Example From Planters website:

Ingredients: ALMONDS, SUGAR, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF: HONEY, CORN SYRUP, PEANUT AND/OR COTTONSEED OIL, COCOA (PROCESSED WITH ALKALI), CINNAMON, FRUCTOSE, SEA SALT, BROWN SUGAR, GUM ARABIC, CORNSTARCH, NATURAL FLAVOR, XANTHAN GUM.
CONTAINS: ALMOND. MANUFACTURED ON EQUIPMENT THAT PROCESSES PEANUT, OTHER TREE NUTS. Size: 6 oz

I am not picking on Planters as this is true for most companies that sell tree nuts. This is just an example. Tree nuts are healthy and as a Registered Dietitian who does not eat meat, including “peanut free” tree nuts in my diet is important. In order to include tree nuts in my diet I have to choose carefully.

This is how I am currently enjoying “peanut free” tree nuts.

1. Pecans from my sister's inlaws who have a **pecan tree**- they mail the pecans to me and I freeze them to savor now and then, I appreciate this so much and should of included this in my “10 acts of Kindness”
2. Peanut free tree nuts from **Blue Mountain Organics** – www.bluemountainorganics.com/store/index.htm, I particularly love the cashews, all their products are peanut free
3. **Blue Diamond Almond** – Almonds, yum – this company is great, so many varieties available today and almost anywhere, states peanut free right on the label, www.bluediamond.com/
4. **Pistachios**- I do not get bulk pistachios only packaged, several varieties I originally identified by contacting the california pistachio board, www.wonderfulpistachios.com/map/index.htm and everybodysnuts.com/
5. **Rise Bars** – I have been enjoying these peanut free, gluten free bars over the past several months, I have ordered some online and can buy some varieties at my local grocery store,



so many varieties, risebar.com

Writing this I just got a craving for some pistachios – yummy!

As always check ingredients and cross contamination before consuming as things may have changed, but if you have a peanut allergy and your doctor says it is ok- try and enjoy some “peanut free” tree nuts!

