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Food safety in the management of food sensitivities: Differentiating allergies from intolerances

Adverse reactions to foods are considered an important public health problem as millions of people experience them worldwide every year. Food allergies are slightly more common in young children and in people who have a family history of them. They mostly develop early in life and many are outgrown. Clinical manifestations of various degrees of severity related to ingestion of foods can arise, only some of which can be defined as allergic implying an immune mechanism, unlike food intolerances which do not have immune system response to the offending food and the problem remains at the level of the digestive system. Despite the risk of severe allergic reactions and even death, there is no current treatment. According to the latest guidelines for the diagnosis and management of food allergy and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in the United States, following effective food safety guidelines and strict elimination of the offending food allergen from the diet and avoidance of any contact with the food by ingestion, skin contact, inhalation or injection remain to date, the only proven medication therapy against a food allergy.

Biography

Carla Vartanian has completed her certification in Clinical Bioethics from Harvard Medical School. She has completed her Master's in Nutrition from the American University of Beirut and European Espen Diploma in Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism. She is a Public Relation Chair of the American Overseas Dietetic Association and has nutrition and health awareness TV shows in Lebanon. She has participated in many international scientific meetings, been teaching in different universities in Lebanon and published health articles in the Middle East. She is an active member of many international nutrition associations around the world.

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