

Jason A. Ohayon MD FRCPC
Consulting Allergy and Clinical Immunology
For Adults and Children

1685 Main St. West Suite 201 Hamilton, ON L8S 1G5 905-777-0088, fax 905-777-0018

Salicylate Allergy

Salicylates are chemicals found naturally in plants and are a major ingredient of aspirin and other pain-relieving medications. They are also found in many fruits and vegetables as well as in many common health and beauty products.

What Are the Symptoms of a Salicylate Allergy?

The degree of reaction to salicylates can vary based on multiple factors. Typically, the content of salicylates can vary from one item to another and even among batches of the same item from the same source. Additionally, the degree of salicylate sensitivity can vary from person to person. People with a low salicylate tolerance may have an allergic reaction if more than a small amount of salicylate is consumed. Symptoms of a salicylate allergy vary but may include:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Asthma-like symptoms, such as trouble breathing and wheezing | |
| Headaches | Itching, skin rash, or hives |
| Nasal congestion | Swelling of the hands, feet, and face |
| Changes in skin color | Stomach pain |

In severe cases, a salicylate allergy can lead to anaphylaxis, a life-threatening reaction involving a severe drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness, and organ system failure. Avoiding products that contain salicylates is the best defense against an allergic reaction.

Salicylates can be found in a variety of foods, medications, and cosmetics. Some examples of salicylate-containing substances include:

Foods That Contain Salicylates

Fruits such as apples, avocados, blueberries, dates, kiwi fruit, peaches, raspberries, figs, grapes, plums, strawberries, cherries, grapefruit, and prunes

Vegetables such as alfalfa, cauliflower, cucumbers, mushrooms, radishes, broad beans, eggplant, spinach, zucchini, broccoli, and hot peppers

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Some cheeses | Ice cream, gelatin |
| Herbs, spices, and condiments such as dry spices and powders, tomato pastes and sauces, vinegar, and soy sauce, jams, and jellies | |

Beverages such as coffee, wine, beer, orange juice, apple cider, regular and herbal tea, rum, and sherry

Nuts such as pine nuts, peanuts, pistachios, and almonds

Some candies, such as peppermints, licorice, and mint-flavored gum and breath mints

Products That May Contain Salicylates

| | |
|--|--|
| Fragrances and perfumes | Mouthwash and mint-flavored toothpaste |
| Shampoos and conditioners | Shaving cream |
| Herbal remedies | Sunscreens or tanning lotions |
| Cosmetics such as lipsticks, lotions, and skin cleansers | Muscle pain creams |
| | Alka Seltzer |

Salicylate-Containing Ingredients

| | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|
| Aspirin | Beta-hydroxy acid | Peppermint |
| Acetylsalicylic acid | Magnesium salicylate | Phenylethyl salicylate |
| Artificial food coloring and flavoring | Menthol | Sodium salicylate |
| Benzoates | Mint | Spearmint |
| | Salicylic acid | |

<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/guide/salicylate-allergy>

For a more comprehensive list of foods, visit:

<http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/allergy/research/salicylatesinfoods.pdf>