

What Is Food Protein-Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome (FPIES)?



Food Protein-Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome (FPIES) is a condition that causes severe vomiting and diarrhea when a trigger food is ingested. The disorder is caused by an abnormal reaction of the immune system to the food protein, causing inflammation in the large and small intestines (enterocolitis). Although FPIES is a type of allergy, it differs from what is commonly referred to as "food allergy" in that a different part of the immune system is causing the reaction.



Usually, the phrase "food allergy" is used to indicate the immune system has overreacted to a food by producing an antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE). The IgE reacts with the ingested food, triggering release of chemicals that cause immediate symptoms of the gastrointestinal, cardiac, skin, and/or respiratory systems.



FPIES, on the other hand, is caused by a different, slower part of the immune system. Symptoms do not begin until **2 to 4 hours** after ingestion. The usual presentation of FPIES is a healthy infant or child that develops diarrhea or vomiting 2 to 4 hours after eating. The symptoms may be severe enough to lead to dehydration. In between episodes, if the food is avoided, the child is healthy. Dramatic symptoms recur after ingestion of the food.

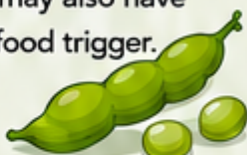
FPIES vs. Food Allergy

FPIES	Food Allergy (IgE-mediated)
Delayed reaction 2 to 4 hours after ingestion	Immediate reaction (minutes to 2 hours)
Non-IgE (mediated by a different, slower part of the immune system)	IgE-mediated (immune system overreaction)
Main symptoms: vomiting, diarrhea, possible dehydration	Symptoms: hives, swelling, vomiting, wheezing, etc.
Typically affects infants and young children	Can affect people of any age
Diagnosed by thorough history, elimination diets, food challenge	Can be detected by classic allergy testing

Common FPIES Triggers



While dairy and soy are the most common FPIES triggers, any food protein can potentially cause a reaction. FPIES patients may also have more than one food trigger.



Because FPIES is a **non-IgE reaction**, it is typically not identified through classic IgE-mediated allergy testing. Rather, a very thorough history will be taken by the evaluating physician to rule out other causes. Other means of evaluating and treating FPIES include elimination diets, elemental diets, and, rarely, food challenge.



Most children will outgrow FPIES, but until that time, FPIES is a serious condition that can require emergency treatment.

If you suspect that your child has FPIES, Contact MASA!



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