

## Oral Allergy Syndrome (a.k.a: Pollen-Food Syndrome)

- Oral allergy syndrome (OAS) or Pollen-Food Syndrome is a condition that typically occurs due to the similarity of proteins between pollens and fruits (including nuts) and vegetables.
- Patients with seasonal allergies are typically affected, especially individuals allergic to birch, weed and grass pollens.
- The condition almost always occurs following the ingestion of raw fruits and vegetables.

**Symptoms** of OAS occur while or shortly after (within 5 minutes) ingesting the offending food and include itching/tingling of the lips, tongue, roof of mouth, and throat. Swelling may also occur and some patients experience a sensation of throat closing. Other organs are rarely affected. Typically the symptoms resolve quickly and rarely require medical treatment.

**Avoidance** of the raw food is recommended.

**Cooking or steaming** the food will often decrease these symptoms.

**Examples** of possible oral allergy relationships are listed below:

1. Ragweed – bananas, melons, zucchini, cucumber, chamomile tea
2. Birch – apples, pears, peaches, apricots, cherries, plums, almond, hazelnut, nectarines, kiwi, carrot, celery, parsley, caraway, fennel, coriander and anise seed, soybean, peanut
3. Grass – peaches, celery, melons, oranges
4. Latex – bananas, avocado, kiwi, chestnut, papaya

**Avoidance of suspected foods is recommended.** Although these reactions rarely result in a severe allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis, patients are encouraged to carry medications such as Benadryl (diphenhydramine) or epinephrine to treat an allergic reaction to the offending food if exposure occurs.

Up to 40% of patients who receive allergy shots for their environmental allergies may lose the oral allergy symptoms caused by foods as a side benefit.