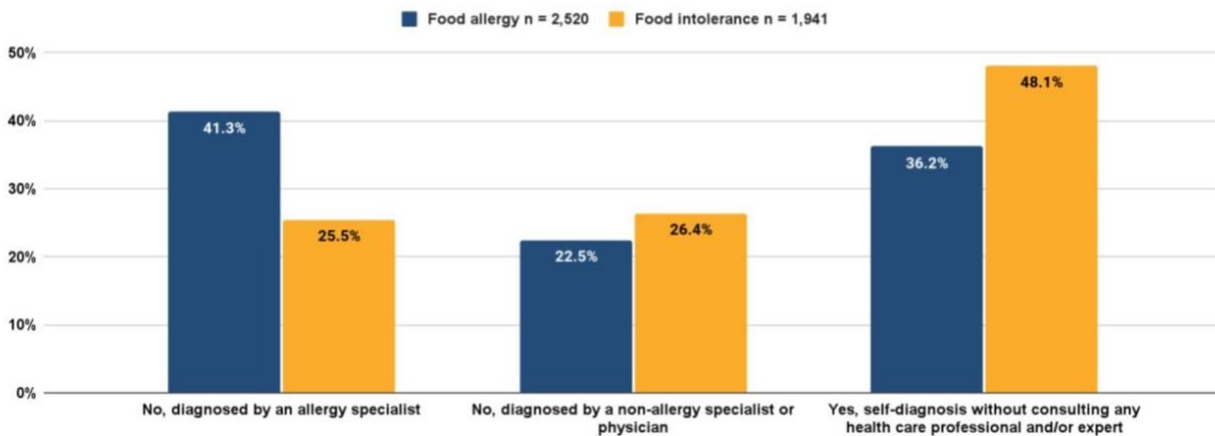


A new report suggests 3.1 million Canadians have food allergies and that more than 7 million suffer from a food intolerance

Halifax, October 20, 2021—Allergies and intolerances can be challenging to manage and in the case of food allergy, it can be potentially life threatening for many Canadians. As the school year is now underway, and Halloween is around the corner, parents and children may experience periods of anxiety and stress in new environments. Food labelling has also been challenging for industry to properly label allergens. Most of the food recalls in 2020 in Canada (about 35%) were due the suspected presence of undeclared allergens in food. The **Agri-Food Analytics Lab, Food Allergy Canada**, in partnership with [Caddle](#), is releasing results of a survey on food allergies and intolerances. The objective was to better understand how predominant food allergies and intolerances are in the Canadian population and to see how Canadians are coping with their condition.

When Canadians were asked if they have any **allergies or intolerances**, our preliminary findings show that 25% of respondents claimed they have at least one allergy and/or intolerance. Of these Canadians, we estimate that anywhere between 2.5 to 3.1 million have at least one food allergy. When asked how their condition was diagnosed, 41.3% of respondents surveyed claimed an allergy expert had diagnosed their condition. A total of 22.4% claimed that their condition was diagnosed by a non-allergy expert or a physician. A total of 36.2% of Canadians said they had self-diagnosed their condition.

Among those who indicated they have a food allergy/food intolerance, is it self-diagnosed?

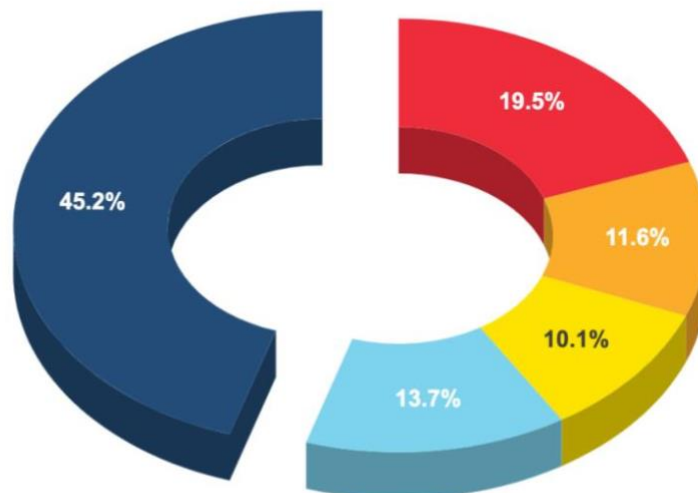


As for food intolerances, it is estimated that between 6.8 to 7.4 million Canadians have at least one food intolerance. A total of 48.1% of respondents indicated their food intolerance was self-diagnosed. All other respondents claimed that their condition had been diagnosed by an allergy expert (25.5%) or by a physician (26.4%).

A total of 45.2% of respondents noticed their allergy and/or intolerance as an adult.¹ A total of 19.6% were diagnosed before the age of 6. While 11.6% were diagnosed between the ages of 6 and 10 years old, 10.1% were diagnosed between the ages of 11 and 15 years old. A total of 13.7% were diagnosed between 16 and 19 years old. Interestingly, 53.9% of respondents claimed that they became aware of their allergy or intolerance within the last 5 years.²

When did you notice your allergy/intolerance?

- Early childhood (< 6 years old)
- Late childhood (6-10 years old)
- Early adolescence (11-15 years old)
- Late adolescence (16-19 years old)
- As an adult



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 Source: Caddle Custom Survey | April, 2021 | n = 10,009



Many Canadians have had reactions to certain foods over the years. While a total of 33.7% have had a reaction several times, 13.8% have had a reaction once. A total of 23.4% have yet to have a reaction. Of

Canadians with a condition, 46.3% believe food products are properly labelled, 27.8% believe food products are not properly labelled, and 25.9% are not sure. A total of 57.8% of respondents with a

¹For food allergies, the average age is typically much younger.

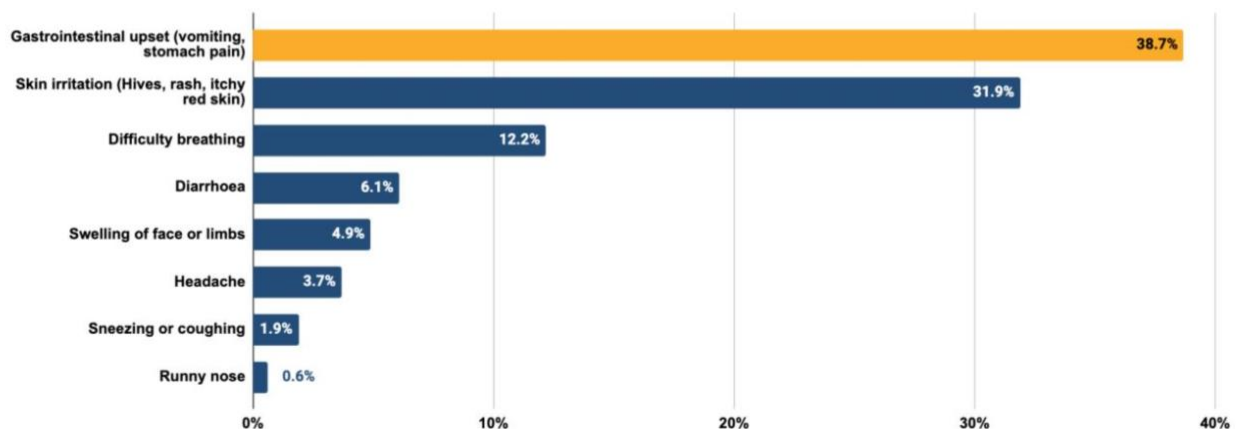
² Clark et al. (2020) suggest that this is due to the overall increase in awareness of food allergies and doesn't necessarily reflect what is happening medically. Clarke, A. E., Elliott, S. J., Pierre, Y. S., Soller, L., La Vieille, S., & Ben-Shoshan, M. (2020). Temporal trends in prevalence of food allergy in Canada. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*, 8(4), 1428-1430.

condition believe grocers offer enough options for people with allergies or intolerances, while this offering is seen as inadequate by many Canadians.

For the food service sector (restaurants), results are different. Only 27.7% of respondents with a condition believe menus properly indicate allergens. As such, 67.5% of respondents with a condition will ask a waiter, a cook or chef for more information about ingredients, either sometimes or all the time. Nonetheless, a total of 46.0% of Canadians have had a reaction at a restaurant at least once, and 25.5% more than once. Symptoms will vary among cases.

“Consumers with food allergy need access to complete and accurate ingredient information, regardless of how the food is manufactured or prepared,” says **Jennifer Gerdts, Executive Director with Food Allergy Canada**. Having the information they need to make a safe, informed choice is critical for our community to stay safe and avoid serious allergic reactions - both for pre-packaged products and food served in restaurants. Knowing what’s in your food is important for all Canadians, but for those with food allergy is essential.”

What are the early signs and symptoms of your reaction (allergy or intolerance)?



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The data shows many Canadians do suffer from food allergies and intolerances and some adjustments are required. While grocers will need to think about offering more choices to consumers with allergies and intolerances, the food service industry will need to be more transparent about ingredients for customers looking for more information about the food they serve. According to a recent poll by **Angus Reid**, 29% of Canadians order food to be delivered to their homes at least once every two weeks. This makes it even more important for consumers to have access to accurate and complete ingredient information when ordering online or through 3rd party delivery services.

Download the preliminary results in English and French at <https://www.dal.ca/sites/agri-food.html>.

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Methodology: Caddle is the largest daily and monthly active panel in the Canadian market. A representative survey of Canadians was conducted in the summer of 2021, in partnership with Caddle. 10,009 Canadians participated in this survey.

Margin of Error: +/- 1.3%, 19 times out of 20. Any discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

Research Ethics Certificate: No. 2020-5215.

Disclosure: Funding for this survey was provided by [Caddle](#) and **Dalhousie University**.