
Systemic Nickel Allergy Syndrome (SNAS)

Nickel is a metal used to make jewelry, coins, stainless steel, and other industrial products. Skin reactions from these products (e.g. jewelry, belt buckles) are very common and include skin rashes, redness, and itching.

Trace amounts of nickel are also found in certain foods, and some individuals may react to foods having a higher nickel content. This condition is referred to as Systemic Nickel Allergy Syndrome, or SNAS.¹ SNAS can be associated with an array of symptoms including skin irritation, rashes, hand eczema, nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea, bloating, gas, and others.^{1,2} While SNAS is not common, if you have some of these symptoms your functional medicine provider may suspect a nickel reaction.

The amount of nickel in food varies by region and is related to the nickel content of the soil. Below is a list of foods that typically have a higher nickel content. If SNAS is suspected, the following foods should be considered for elimination for a period of four weeks.³ Low-and-moderate nickel-containing foods are less likely to be a concern. Your functional medicine practitioner can provide personalized guidance on eliminating nickel-containing foods from your diet.

Nickel-Containing Foods ⁴

- **Grains:** buckwheat, bran (all), millet, muesli, multi-grain bread, oatmeal, rice
- **Vegetables:** asparagus, kale, leeks, lettuce, spinach, sprouts
- **Nuts and Seeds:** almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts
- **Fruits:** dates, figs, pineapple, plums, prunes, raspberries, rhubarb
- **Meat and Seafood:** canned tuna, herring, mackerel, mussels, oysters, shrimp
- **Beans and Legumes:** chickpeas, green beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, peas, pinto beans, refried beans, soy, white beans
- **Other:** black tea, chocolate, soy sauce, soy protein, tofu

REFERENCES

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