

Allergies and food intolerance

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Ham and chicken croquettes

Ingredients to serve 4:

- 75 g cured ham, shredded
- 75 g chicken
- 1/2 litre milk (lactose-free for intolerants)
- 70 g flour (Proceli for coeliacs)
- 40 g cornstarch
- 1/2 onion
- Nutmeg, salt and pepper
- Fine breadcrumbs to coat (gluten-free for coeliacs)
- Beaten egg (in case of intolerance, use milk instead)



Edmon Amill

Prepare a thick béchamel sauce, form and breadcrumb the croquettes and fry in plenty of olive oil until nicely golden. They are delicious, and you will not notice the difference.

A food allergy is diagnosed if the immune system is responsible for the body's response to certain foodstuffs. Allergic reactions are countered by immunoglobulin E and affect 3% of the population, particularly children.

Allergies have an individual genetic basis, and the only treatment is not to eat the food which triggers the response.

Food intolerance leads to symptoms similar to those of an allergy, but less intense: itching, flatulence, abdominal pain, inflamed mouth or lips, sneezing and coughing. Treatment generally involves withdrawing the food from the diet and reintroducing it little by little.

Allergens are protein-based components present in foodstuffs, with the following accounting for 60-65% of cases:

- **Albumin** such as the allergen present in egg white: patients are sensitive to hen's eggs and those of other fowl, food industry products and vaccines containing albumin.
- The **milk** of cows, goats or sheep is the most common allergen in babies; the cow's milk proteins reach the newborn via the mother's milk, causing vomiting and abdominal pain.
- **Fish** in general.
- **Crustaceans** and **shellfish**: prawns, whether raw or cooked, are the most common, followed by oysters.
- **Nuts**: peanuts, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts and pine nuts. Legumes, broad beans.
- **Fresh fruit**, such as peaches and apricots, melon and strawberries.

Those allergic to latex should be aware that they may develop cross-reactions with some foodstuffs. Some of the most common are:

- **High risk**: avoid bananas, kiwi fruit, chestnuts and pistachios.
- **Moderate risk**: avoid apples, carrots, celery, tomato, papaya, raw potato, melon and peanuts.
- **Low risk**: avoid pears, peaches, strawberries, soya, figs and walnuts.

Intolerance to **lactose** (the sugar in milk) is found in 20% of the Western population and 80% of the population of Asia and Africa, causing constipation and cases of irritable bowel syndrome.

Coeliacs suffer intolerance to wheat gluten and will need to check the labelling of certain cured and processed meats.

The effect of choline is currently being studied as an anti-asthmatic agent, as it reduces the production of bronchial mucus and protects the airways from obstruction, along with the action of omega-3 fatty acids, in particular EPA and DHA, as they reduce the formation of arachidonic acid.

Here I suggest a traditional dish adapted for those with food intolerance:

