

## Garlic can trigger allergic reactions

BfR Opinion No. 006/2007, 5 January 2007

In principle allergies can be triggered by every food. The 12 ingredients, which can cause allergies and certain intolerances most frequently, must be listed on packaged food. Furthermore, we know of other relevant allergens – like lupins, seafood and crustaceans but also carrots, cucumber, oranges, pineapple, tomatoes, raw potatoes, peaches, kiwis, mangoes, lychees and peas – which did not have to be labelled up to now. BfR has examined whether there have been indications of an allergenicity of garlic and whether garlic should be labelled as an ingredient.

In the literature there are reports of various cases of allergic reactions to garlic: bronchial asthma after inhaling pulverised garlic, contact allergies in the case of people exposed to garlic during their work in food production and allergic shock after consuming garlic. There have also been observations of gastrointestinal disorders following the consumption of larger amounts of garlic. Sulphur-containing diallyl disulphide, which forms in garlic after destruction of the cell structure, is assumed to be the allergen. A garlic allergy seems to occur more in individuals who also suffer from a pollen allergy. The available data are not, however, sufficient in order to be able to make a representative statement about the incidence of garlic intolerance amongst the population at large.

The allergenic potential of garlic, measured in terms of the severity and frequency of allergic reactions, is far lower than that of the 12 main allergens which are subject to mandatory labelling. BfR, therefore, believes that there is no urgent need for the special labelling of garlic as an ingredient or for the inclusion of garlic in the list of ingredients subject to mandatory labelling. BfR advises consumers with oversensitivity to garlic to ask the manufacturer in the case of foods that might contain garlic, or in the case of loose goods like sausage, cheese or salad to ask the sales personnel or the staff in the restaurant.

The full version of the BfR Opinion in German is available on  
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