

# Alpha Gal Allergy

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## What is alpha-gal allergy?

- An IgE antibody response to galactose- $\alpha$ -1,3-galactose (“alpha gal”) that develops after the patient gets a tick bite from the Lone Star Tick
- Eating red meat (mammal meat) which contains alpha-gal causes an allergic reaction



## How is alpha-gal allergy treated?

- Strict avoidance of mammalian meat (instruct to avoid anything with hooves or that nurses its young)
- May need to also avoid gelatin and possibly milk (rare)
- Patient education (including regarding cetuximab cross-reaction potential)
- Injectable epinephrine always available
- Education on tick avoidance measures
- Follow up levels in 6-12 months, eventually levels may decrease without further tick bites

## What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms can range from hives to anaphylaxis (throat swelling, difficulty breathing, abdominal pain, n/v, shock, death)
- Symptoms are often delayed, occurring up to 8 hours after the ingestion of mammal meat

## How is alpha-gal diagnosed?

- Alpha-gal allergy is diagnosed with a blood test.

## How does it differ from typical food allergy?

- Delayed onset of several hours
- Reaction types can vary
- Dose dependency
- Age of patients
- Lack of atopic disease
- Geographical distribution

## Questions?

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