

FOOD ALLERGENS IN ORAL CARE PRODUCTS

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INTRODUCTION

Food allergies are a growing concern and can dramatically impact the quality of life of those affected (1). In recent years, **several food allergens have been introduced into the oral care industry**, to improve their properties and to provide the best possible treatment for users (2–4).

Most food allergens are animal proteins (milk, egg, shellfish, etc.), plant proteins (gluten, soy) and other plant compounds. Allergens may be present in medicines and health and hygiene products, resulting in an expanded burden of illness and a growing spectrum of threats (5).

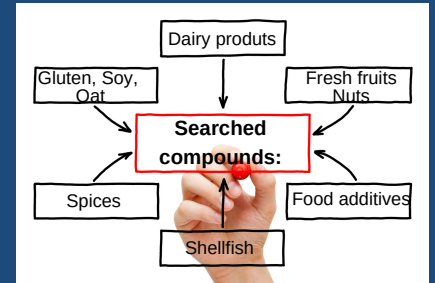
GOALS

This study was developed with the purpose of ascertaining the **presence of food allergens** in dental medicine products, both for individual use and professional use in the Dental Office.

METHODS

The labeling of **298 products** marketed in Portugal and available in hypermarkets, pharmacies and online was consulted:

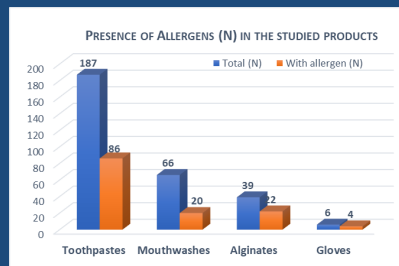
- 187 toothpastes
- 66 mouthwashes
- 39 alginates
- 6 gloves



RESULTS

The results show a **high prevalence of food allergens**:

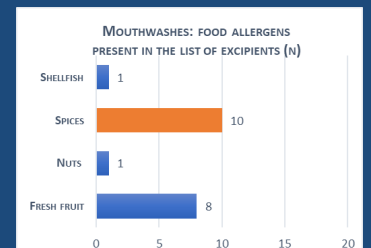
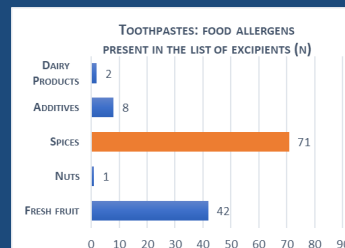
- 46% in toothpastes
- 30% in mouthwashes
- 56% in alginates
- 67% in gloves



Most prevalent allergens:

- **toothpastes**
 - total of 36 different food allergens
 - 57% spices (59% peppermint)
- **mouthwashes**
 - total of 26 different food allergens
 - 50% spices (46% peppermint)
- **alginates**
 - total of 27 different food allergens
 - 67% fresh fruits
- **gloves**
 - 100% oat

Many products have insufficient information and there are few studies regarding maximum tolerated doses of allergens.



CONCLUSIONS

This survey highlights that **many oral care products contain compounds that may induce allergic reactions** in patients with food allergies.

Since **even small doses of food allergens may be sufficient to trigger allergic reactions**, it is of utmost importance that Dentists are alert to this risk.

It is also essential to communicate strategically with the industry of health care products and health policy makers to improve production procedures, to **find alternatives** to animal and plant compounds with allergic properties, and to **emphasize the presence of possible allergens on product labeling** to safeguard the health of patients.