

## Tips for Parents of Children with Peanut Allergies

Are you the parent of a child who has a peanut allergy? If you are and if this is a first time experience for you, you may be looking for some guidance. After all, knowing that your child's life is, literally, in your hands, can be overwhelming for many parents.

One of the first things that you will want to do, as a parent, is talk to your child about their peanut allergy. This is important to do as soon as your child can understand the concept of allergies and not eating certain foods. This time often occurs at the preschool level. You may need to talk to your child more than once, but it is important to let them know what could happen if they share food with friends or classmates. If your child is older or a teenager, you can teach them proactive steps, such as checking all food labels.

As important as it is to talk to your child about their peanut allergy, it is extremely important to talk to anyone who may come into contact with your child. These individuals include teachers, school nurses, family members, and parents of friends. You may be surprised to know that many food allergies, including allergic reactions to peanuts, happen when a parents is not present. That is why it is extremely important that all adults know about your child's allergic reactions to peanuts. When your child leaves your home to visit friends or family, pack safe snacks for them to eat.

If you and your child are known for eating out, it is important that you ask as many questions as possible. You should do so at all eating establishments, but it is particularly important to do at a bakery. Are all baked goods made in the same spot, like on the same table? Even if not, are gloves changed? What are the chances that a peanut or peanut butter can make its ways into other foods? You should know before feeding your child anything that you did not prepare yourself.

Speaking of the foods that you do prepare yourself, be sure to read all food labels. When doing so, you may be surprised just how many products have warnings that claim that peanuts may be present. Even if they only "may," be, you are still advised to proceed with caution and skip. Also, make sure that you always read labels, as food manufacturers are known for updating or changing their ingredients.

It is also important to know how to handle a reaction. There is a good chance that your child's doctor will teach you the proper steps that you should take, which will likely include administering medicine to help your child breathe. It is also important to educate those around you too. Make sure that all

relatives, parents of friends, and school teachers know what to do in the event of an allergic reaction to peanuts. If medication is provided by your doctor, which it should be, make sure the school has some and always carry the medication with you, like in your car or in your purse.

The above mentioned tips are just a few of the many tips that you will want to keep in mind, should your child have a peanut allergy. It is no secret that caring for a child with a peanut allergy can be difficult and stressful, as you really do need to watch every step that you and your child take. For that reason, there are a number helpful books out there for parents like yourself, as well as online message boards where support is provided, often by other parents just like you.

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