

## Tips for Parents of Children with Food Allergies

Are you the parent of a child who suffers with food allergies? If you are, you may be looking for some helpful tips to cope with your child's medical condition.

One of the first things that you will want to do is talk to your child about their food allergy. This is most important to do with preschoolers and young elementary school aged children. It is common for this age group to switch snacks or share snacks with their friends or classmates, but it isn't always safe to do so. The younger that you have this conversation with your child, the better it will be. For small children, be sure to discuss your child's food allergy with them more than once. For older children and teenagers, teach them how they can read food labels themselves.

In addition to talking to your child, be sure to talk to anyone and everyone that comes into contact with your child. This includes teachers, school nurses, daycare providers, relatives, and parents of friends. A large number of food reactions happen outside of the home when a parent is not present. If you are sending your child to visit family or a friend, it may be a wise idea to send your own bag of safe, approved snacks.

As for feeding a child with food allergies at home, it is important to read all labels. Some foods, even those that may not contain nuts or wheat, may still have a warning stating that these products may be found in the food. If so, it is best to stay away. It is also important that you read the labels of foods that your child will eat every time. To some parents this may seem like a waste of time, but manufacturers are known to change their recipes and the ingredients that they use. For that reason, it is better to be safe than sorry.

When eating away from home with your child, like at a fast food restaurant, a nice sit down resultant, deli, or bakery, it is always a good idea to ask questions first. This is most important to do at delis and bakeries. Are all foods made on the same spot? At a deli, is a different meat cutter used for meats and cheeses? They should be if your child has allergies to milk and other dairy products. Is there a chance that a certain food, like peanuts or wheat may have been used or even just casually made their way into other products?

It is also important that you know how to handle an allergic reaction to food. Be sure that those around you and your child know how to handle a food reaction as well. If your child is given medication to take in the event of an allergic reaction, make sure that medication is with you and your child at all times. At school or for daycare, give the medication to the school nurse or daycare

provider. If your child is visiting friends or family, be sure to give the medication to the adult and let them know when it needs to be used, if at all.

If your child has an allergic reaction to something that they ate, it is important to determine right away if your child needs medical attention. Many parents like to seek medication attention for their kids even if it appears that they are okay. This is more than possible to do, especially if the food allergy is relatively new or if it is the first couple of times that you are dealing with an allergic reaction.

As you can see, there are a number of important tips that you must keep in mind and know if you are the parent of a child who suffers from a foods allergy, especially a peanut allergy. Since most allergic reactions happen when a parent is not around, be sure to keep all adults that have contact with your child well informed.

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