



Food Allergies in Children

Some children can have allergic reactions to certain foods. Avoiding these foods — or “allergens” — is the first step toward helping children safely enjoy meals and snacks.

What Does a Food Allergy Look Like?

Symptoms include*:



Airway

Wheezing

Throat swelling

Itchy throat

Shortness of breath

Coughing

Swollen tongue



Circulation

Pale skin

Light-headedness

Loss of consciousness



Stomach

Nausea

Vomiting

Diarrhea

Belly pain



Skin

Hives (red spots that look like mosquito bites)

Itchy skin rashes

Swelling



Nasal

Nasal congestion

Runny nose

Sneezing

Foods That Can Trigger an Allergic Reaction

Any food could trigger an allergic reaction, but most reactions are triggered by:

- Cow's milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Soy
- Wheat
- Nuts from trees (such as walnuts, pistachios, pecans, or cashews)
- Fish (such as tuna, salmon, or cod)
- Shellfish (such as shrimp or lobster)
- Sesame seeds (such as fast food buns)



*If you think your child has a food allergy, contact your health care provider right away.

Tips for Parents and Families on Back...

Tips for Parents and Families

Here are some tips to help children with food allergies enjoy meals and snacks safely:



Work with the School Community:

Partnering with school staff is key for food allergy safety. Parents can tell teachers and school health care providers what food allergies their children have. It's also important to keep all school medical forms updated.



Read Food Labels:

Food labels list the ingredients used to make a product, including any allergens. But some labels use uncommon words, such as "semolina" (wheat), "bean curd" (soy), or "albumin" (eggs). Parents should read every label, learn how to spot allergens, and teach their children to do the same. Learn more about how to read food labels at kidswithfoodallergies.org/choosing-safe-foods.aspx.



Prepare Meals at Home:

Preparing meals at home is the best way to make sure food is safe. Having children help out in the kitchen can also teach them which foods to eat or avoid.

Parents can tell teachers and school health care providers what food allergies their children have.



Make Sure Your Child Has an Annual Checkup:

Food allergies can change over time. Visiting a health care provider regularly can help parents make sure a child's allergy is managed the right way.



Always Carry Medications (if Prescribed) and Create a Food Allergy Action Plan:

Work with your child and your child's provider to make an asthma action plan. Some food allergies can be life threatening. Parents and children should always carry anti-allergy medication if prescribed by a doctor. Common anti-allergy medications include diphenhydramine (Benadryl), cetirizine (Zyrtec), and epinephrine autoinjectors (EpiPen or AUVI-Q).