Find out what schools are doing to protect kids with dangerous food allergies and how you can keep your child with a food allergy safe.

Your child with a dangerous food allergy is nearing school age and you are concerned.

- Will my child be safe at school?
- Will he or she be exposed to other kids’ foods?
- Do teachers and staff know what to do in case my child has an allergic reaction or goes into anaphylaxis?

These are important questions. First, know that your child is not alone. More than 3 million kids in the U.S. have food allergies.

What should I do to keep my child safe at school?

Months before your child enters preschool — or as soon as you learn your child is allergic — meet with your child’s doctor, then the school nurse.

Create an allergic reaction action plan with your child’s doctor. The plan provides written documentation of your child’s allergic symptoms and how to treat them.

The plan also includes:
- A photo of the child
- All food allergies
- Emergency contact information

An example of such a plan is called the “Food Allergy Action Plan,” from the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network.

Make sure your child’s school has a plan to both prevent and treat allergic reactions. After you give the school nurse the action plan you wrote with your child’s doctor, make sure the school plan meets your child’s needs in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in after-care programs, during school-sponsored activities and on the school bus. The school should:
- Train staff to recognize allergic symptoms and to give epinephrine if prescribed
- Have practice drills
- Ensure that there is always someone available to give the shot, including during field trips

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What should I teach my child to self-manage his/her food allergy?

Teach your child:

- Safe and unsafe foods
- Ways to avoid exposure to unsafe foods
- Symptoms of allergic reactions
- How and when to tell an adult he or she may be having an allergic reaction
- How to read food labels

What should my child do to keep safe?

- Don’t trade food with others.
- Don’t eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Tell an adult if being harassed or bullied about his or her allergies.
- Tell an adult right away if he or she eats something that may contain the food to which he or she is allergic.

Also, it is strongly advised that anyone who is susceptible to anaphylactic reactions to foods (or to any other allergen, or to bee stings) wear a medical alert bracelet. Keep your child’s medications up-to-date and properly labeled.

Do you have health care questions or are you looking to get connected with additional health and well-being resources? Call HelpCare Advisor today.

HelpCare Advisor
1-855-583-3165 [TTY: 711]
https://client.myoptumhealth.com/takecharge

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Sources:

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