

AAIR FOOD ALLERGY RESOURCE



AAIR

ASTHMA AND ALLERGY
IMPACT AND RESCUE

Readiness Saves Lives

Essential Guidance for Families Managing Food Allergies

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ASTHMA AND ALLERGY
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UNDERSTANDING THE 9 MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS

Definition: The 9 top food allergens account for the majority of serious reactions in children.

**Eggs - Milk - Fish - Shellfish - Tree Nuts -
Peanuts - Wheat - Soy - Sesame**

Potential Symptoms:

- Skin: Hives, swelling, itching, redness
- Gastrointestinal: Vomiting, abdominal pain, cramping.
- Respiratory: Wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, unable to move air through throat.
- Cardiovascular: Dizziness, lightheadedness, faintness, rapid pulse, low blood pressure.
- Other: Tingling in the mouth, metallic taste.

Recommended Tactics:

- Know Your Allergens: Be able to identify your specific allergens and hidden forms they might take.
- Read Labels: Always read food labels carefully for allergen statements (see Section 6: Understanding Food Allergen Labeling Laws).
- Communicate Clearly: Inform all caregivers, friends, and family about your specific food allergies.
- Avoid Cross-Contact: Understand and implement strategies to prevent cross-contact (see Section 4: What is Cross-Contact?).

DINING OUT SAFELY WITH FOOD ALLERGIES



Definition: Restaurants are possible with planning and advocacy.

Potential Symptoms:

- Symptoms of an allergic reaction due to accidental exposure (refer to 'Understanding the 9 Major Food Allergens').

Recommended Tactics:

- Call Ahead: Call ahead and speak with the manager or chef.
- Use Allergy Cards: Use allergy cards and bring medication.
- Bring Medication: Always carry two epinephrine auto-injectors and any other prescribed medications.
- Avoid High-Risk Items: Avoid foods fried in the same oil, buffets and shared-prep kitchens.
- Order Simply: Choose simply prepared dishes with fewer ingredients.
- Educate Staff: Politely but firmly explain your allergies and ask how the restaurant handles them.
- Be Prepared to Leave: If you don't feel confident in the restaurant's ability to accommodate your allergies, it's safer to leave.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Definition:
Know the signs.
Carry medication.
Act quickly.

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Potential Symptoms:

- Mild to Moderate: Hives, itching, swelling (lips, face, eyes), nasal congestion, sneezing, mild abdominal pain, nausea.
- Severe (Anaphylaxis): Hives, vomiting, trouble breathing, wheezing, repetitive cough, throat tightness, hoarseness, sudden drop in blood pressure, dizziness, fainting, pale or blue skin, and sense of impending doom.

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Recommended Tactics:

- Know the Signs: Be familiar with the symptoms of an allergic reaction, especially anaphylaxis.
- Carry Medication: Carry 2 epinephrine auto-injectors at all times.
- Act Quickly: Administer epinephrine at the first sign of a serious reaction; do not wait.
- Call 911: Call 911 after epinephrine is given if symptoms not immediately and completely better. .
- Lie Down: Lie the person down with legs elevated unless they are vomiting or having trouble breathing.
- Seek Emergency Care: Go to the nearest emergency room even if any symptoms persist or recur, a biphasic reaction (a second reaction) can occur hours later.
- Develop an Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan: Have a doctor-approved plan readily available and ensure all caregivers know how to follow it.



WHAT IS CROSS-CONTACT?

Definition: Cross-contact happens when allergen-free food touches allergen residue.

Potential Symptoms:

- Symptoms of an allergic reaction due to accidental exposure (refer to 'Understanding the 9 Major Food Allergens').

Recommended Tactics:

- **Separate Tools and Surfaces:** Use separate tools and surfaces.
- **Thorough Cleaning:** Clean hands and prep areas thoroughly.
- **Avoid High-Risk Setups:** Avoid high-risk setups like bulk bins.
- **Designate 'Safe' Zones:** In shared kitchens, designate specific shelves, drawers, or areas for allergen-free foods.
- **Label Clearly:** Label all food containers clearly to avoid confusion.
- **Cook Separately:** If possible, cook allergen-free meals separately or before allergen-containing meals.



TRAVELING WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Definition:
Whether by car,
plane, or
abroad, build in
safety at every
stop.

Potential Symptoms:

- Symptoms of an allergic reaction due to accidental exposure during travel.

Recommended Tactics:

- **Bring Safe Food:** Bring safe food, allergy cards, and medication.
- **Carry Allergy Cards:** Have allergy cards in multiple languages if traveling internationally.
- **Medication Accessibility:** Keep all medications in your carry-on luggage and easily accessible.
- **Check Airline Policies:** Check airline and hotel policies in advance.
- **Hotel Policies:** Contact hotels beforehand to inquire about their allergy protocols.
- **Research Local Cuisine:** Learn common phrases for your allergies in the local language.
- **Travel Insurance:** Consider travel insurance that covers medical emergencies.
- **Medical Alert:** Wear a medical alert bracelet, necklace, clothing, and note in digital devices.

NAVIGATING SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Definition: Social events can be safe with proactive planning.

Potential Symptoms:

- Symptoms of an allergic reaction due to accidental exposure in a social setting.
- Social anxiety or exclusion due to food allergies.



Recommended Tactics:

- Talk to Hosts Ahead of Time: Talk to hosts ahead of time.
- Bring Safe Options: Bring safe options.
- Teach Polite Refusal: Teach polite refusal and backup planning.
- Backup Planning: Bring your own snacks or know safe options nearby.
- Communicate with Others: Explain your allergies to those present.
- Focus on Non-Food Activities: Suggest or participate in non-food-centric events.
- Carry Medication: Ensure you have your epinephrine auto-injectors.

EDUCATING FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Definition: The more people understand, the safer your child is.

Potential Symptoms:

- **Mismanagement of a reaction by an uninformed caregiver.**
- **Accidental exposure due to lack of awareness.**



Recommended Tactics:

- **Explain Allergic Reactions:** Explain what allergic reactions look like.
- **Demonstrate Label Reading:** Show how to read labels and avoid risks.
- **Review Emergency Plan:** Go over the Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan.
- **Practice Epinephrine Use:** Teach and practice auto-injector use.
- **Leave Instructions:** Leave clear instructions with caregivers.
- **Share Resources:** Direct them to FARE or the FDA.
- **Open Communication:** Encourage questions and engagement.

LABELING & ORGANIZING FOODS AT HOME

Potential Symptoms:

- Accidental allergen exposure due to mix-ups in the kitchen.

Recommended Tactics:

- Labeled Shelves and Containers: Use labeled shelves and containers.
- Keep Allergen-Free Foods Separate: Store foods safely apart.
- Color-Coding: Use color-coded tools for allergen-free prep.
- Dedicated Appliances: Consider separate appliances for allergen-free cooking.
- Cleanliness: Regularly clean kitchen surfaces and utensils.
- Educate Household Members: Make sure everyone knows the system.

Definition: Organized kitchens prevent accidents.





RESOURCES FOR TEENS MANAGING THEIR OWN ALLERGIES

Potential Symptoms:

- Anxiety or reluctance to self-advocate.
- Accidental exposure due to lack of preparedness or confidence.

Recommended Tactics:

- Practice Explaining Allergies: Role-play real-life scenarios.
- Use Medical Alert Tools: Wear ID and keep meds handy.
- Carry Medications: Always have two epinephrine auto-injectors.
- Celebrate Independence: Encourage and reward safe choices.
- Connect with Peers: Foster support with other teens.
- Teach Problem-Solving: Build confidence through planning.
- Empower Advocacy: Help them own their safety story.

Definition: Teens need tools and confidence to advocate for themselves

Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan

Definition: Be prepared with a step-by-step plan to recognize and treat an allergic emergency.

Potential Symptoms:

- Severe allergic reaction symptoms: trouble breathing, hives, swelling, vomiting, dizziness.

Recommended Tactics:

- Recognize Symptoms: Learn the early warning signs.
- Administer Epinephrine Immediately: Use auto-injector at first sign. Or use Neffy (epinephrine nasal spray).
- Call 911: Report it as anaphylaxis.
- Position the Person: Lie them down unless vomiting or struggling to breathe.
- Follow Up with Emergency Care: Go to the ED if not immediately and completely better with epinephrine.
- Share the Plan: Caregivers and staff should have a copy.
- Regular Review: Update the plan annually with your doctor.

Epinephrine Treatments

Definition: Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis and must be given without delay.

Potential Symptoms:

- Untreated or delayed treatment of anaphylaxis can be life-threatening.

Recommended Tactics:

- Always Carry Two Auto-Injectors: Have two on hand at all times.
- Teach All Caregivers: Ensure proper use by everyone involved.
- Use at First Sign: Don't delay when symptoms appear.
- Call 911 Immediately After Use if not immediately and completely better: Medical backup is critical.
- Replace Used or Expired Devices: Monitor expiration dates.
- Proper Storage: Store at room temperature and out of sunlight.
- Practice with Trainers: Build confidence through repetition.



SAFE AT SCHOOL

Definition: From lunchrooms to classrooms, planning helps your child stay safe.

Potential Symptoms:

- Accidental exposure in school.
- Lack of emergency response.
- Social isolation due to allergy management.

Recommended Tactics:

- Create a Doctor-Approved Allergy Action Plan.
- Provide Medication and Instructions.
- Train Teachers and Staff.
- Explore 504 Plans.
- Communicate Regularly with the school.
- Request Safe Seating if needed.
- Avoid Food Sharing policies.
- Support Inclusive Celebrations.
- Provide Safe Snacks and Alternatives.



ASTHMA & ALLERGY IMPACT & RESCUE

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www.weareaaair.org 

OUR MISSION

The mission of Asthma and Allergy Impact and Rescue (AAIR) is to see all children

- rescued at school
- healthy at home
- connected to care



RESCUED AT SCHOOL

Every child should have the necessary resources to learn and thrive at school.



HEALTHY AT HOME

Every child should have a safe and healthy environment in their home and community.



CONNECTED TO CARE

Every child should be connected to a medical professional who will provide care in their neighborhood.

OUR STORY

We are AAIR — Asthma and Allergy Impact and Rescue — an organization united by a commitment to support children affected by asthma and allergies. Driven by an unwavering dedication to changing systems, not just treating symptoms, our resolve is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to live a healthy life. Through our programs, legislative advocacy, and policy change efforts, we are working toward a future where everyone, regardless of circumstance, has equal access to lifesaving treatments, disease management education, and the resources needed to overcome the barriers that prevent them from attending school and leading fulfilling lives. Asthma and allergies are manageable, but without proper care, they can lead to hospitalization or even death. These conditions impose significant health, economic, and emotional burdens on individuals, families, and society. Together, we can change this. Together, we can ensure that every child has the support they need to breathe easy, thrive, and reach their full potential.

PROGRAMS & STRATEGY

RESCUE

RESCUE is a K-12 program that equips school nurses and staff with stock albuterol, medical equipment, and training. The program ensures the availability of essential medication and tools for managing asthma emergencies in schools.

NEW DIAGNOSIS KITS

The New Diagnosis Kits program is a growing national program to support families struggling with asthma or food allergies. Backpacks contain medical equipment, educational resources, and child-friendly educational toys.

BREATH

BREATH is a prescription assistance program for children with an asthma and allergy diagnosis. The program covers prescription and medical equipment costs and provides home assessments and support.

ADVOCACY & POLICY

AAIR is a champion for legislation that makes communities safer for people with asthma and allergies. We have a 13-year track record of expanding stock medication legislation and funding across the country.



GET IN TOUCH



5501 Delmar Blvd. Suite A450
St. Louis, MO 63112



314-645-2422