

FOOD ALLERGY FACT SHEET

Managing Food Allergies: Family Day Care

1. Create a food allergy policy.

- Create a written policy with actions you should take in case a student has an allergic reaction.
- Have a plan for another adult to help you in case of a medical emergency, such as an allergic reaction.
- Notify parents/guardians about any reactions or exposures to an allergen.
- If outside foods are allowed, limit them to pre-packaged foods with complete ingredient lists.
- Check all ingredient labels for allergens.
- Require all children to wash their hands when entering your home, and before and after meals and snacks to prevent cross-contact.
- Information about a child with food allergies should be kept private.

2. Create an individual food allergy plan for each child with a food allergy.

- Obtain completed medical statement (form available from your sponsoring organization). Talk with parents/guardians if you need clarification about the completed forms.
- Work with parents/guardians to create a plan to treat a reaction, if it occurs.
- Put the plan in writing for the parents/guardians to review.
- Keep the plan where you can refer to it easily.
- Obtain any needed medications from parents/guardians. Be sure you understand when and how to give each medication.
- Keep medications in a location that is secure but accessible in an emergency.
- Work with parents/guardians to create an affordable plan using the resources you have.

3. Take actions to avoid exposure to food allergens.

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after each task. Using water alone or hand sanitizer alone does not remove allergens.
- Wash all utensils and cookware before and after each use.
- Wash all food contact surfaces before and after each use.
- Use designated cutting boards and designated work areas to prepare food for children with food allergies.
- Store foods so that allergy-safe foods do not come in contact with other foods.
- Prepare allergy-safe food first.
- Clean tables and chairs before and after meals and snacks.
- Prevent trading or sharing food, food utensils, or food containers.
- Avoid foods that a child is allergic to in art projects or cooking activities.
- Limit food to specific areas in the house.
- Ask parents/guardians to approve of items such as body lotions, sunscreens, shampoos, and creams as these may contain allergenic ingredients that could be ingested.
- Inform other family members that may have access to food and food contact surfaces about the allergy issues.



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4. Know how to read ingredient labels.

- Most ingredient labels list the top eight foods causing allergic reactions using their common or usual name (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and crustacean shellfish).
- Check labels for warning statements that begin with “may contain,” “produced on shared equipment,” or “produced in a plant that uses.” These foods should be avoided.
- Check labels for allergens on every product each time the product is purchased.
- When the label is unclear, call the manufacturer.

For More Information

American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology
www.aaaai.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network
www.foodallergy.org

Food Allergy Initiative
www.faiusa.org

Food and Nutrition Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov

Food Insight (Web site sponsored by International Food Information Council Foundation)

www.foodinsight.org

National Food Service Management Institute
www.nfsmi.org

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
www.niaid.nih.gov

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education
www.nrckids.org

School Nutrition Association
www.schoolnutrition.org

U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

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