

Managing Food Allergies at School

A Checklist for Parents

School should be safe — with the right plan, it can be.

Before the School Year Starts

Meet with School Administration

- Schedule a meeting with the principal, school nurse, and your child's teacher(s)
- Provide written documentation of your child's allergies and treatment plan
- Discuss your child's specific triggers and symptoms
- Review the school's existing food allergy policies
- Request a 504 Plan or Individualized Health Plan (IHP) if needed

Provide Emergency Medications

- Supply TWO unexpired epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, or generic)
- Provide antihistamine (Benadryl) in age-appropriate dosage
- Ensure all medications are properly labeled with your child's name
- Complete medication authorization forms
- Verify storage location (nurse's office, classroom, or both)

Create an Emergency Action Plan

Work with your allergist to create a Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan (FAAECP) that includes:

- Your child's photo
- List of allergens
- Signs and symptoms of a reaction
- Step-by-step treatment instructions
- Emergency contact numbers
- Healthcare provider information

Train School Staff

- Ensure the school nurse is trained to recognize anaphylaxis
- Request that teachers, aides, and cafeteria staff receive training
- Demonstrate how to use your child's specific epinephrine auto-injector
- Provide photos of allergen-containing foods that should be avoided
- Establish clear communication protocols for field trips and events

Classroom Safety Measures

- Request allergen-free zones if appropriate
- Establish hand-washing protocols before and after eating
- Discuss birthday party and celebration policies with the teacher
- Provide safe snacks for classroom parties (keep a stash with the teacher)
- Review classroom art supplies (some contain allergens like wheat or eggs)
- Ensure cleaning protocols for shared surfaces

Cafeteria & Lunch Safety

- Meet with cafeteria manager to review menu and ingredients
- Establish a designated safe eating area if needed
- Determine whether your child will pack lunch or eat school meals
- Label all packed lunch items clearly
- Train lunch monitors on your child's allergies
- Create a plan for handling food sharing/trading

Field Trips & Special Events

- Ensure epinephrine travels with your child on all trips
- Provide written permission for staff to administer emergency medication

- Review destination's food policies in advance
- Consider attending field trips as a chaperone
- Send safe snacks and meals from home
- Confirm a trained adult will supervise your child

Teach Your Child to Self-Advocate

Age-appropriate self-advocacy is crucial. Teach your child to:

- Say "I have a food allergy to ____" to adults
- Never accept food from other students without checking
- Read labels (older children)
- Recognize early symptoms of a reaction
- Know where emergency medication is stored
- Tell an adult immediately if they feel unwell
- Wash hands before and after eating
- Not share food, utensils, or drink containers

Throughout the School Year

- Check expiration dates on school-stored medications monthly
- Update emergency contacts if they change
- Communicate any changes in allergy status to the school
- Attend parent-teacher conferences to discuss allergy management
- Review plan at start of second semester
- Prepare substitutes and new staff with allergy information

Need help creating a school plan? Call us at 262-657-9390