

Special Needs Family Materials

Your Child's Food Allergy

Five Tips to Help Your Child Care Provider

When a child has a food allergy, families and child care providers work hand-in-hand to assure quality care.

Here is a handful of tips for families to help child care providers meet your child's special needs.

1. Talk with your child care provider as soon as possible about your child's allergy.
2. Get a statement from your child's medical doctor for your provider. This statement is required before your child care provider can make changes to your child's meals to meet your child's nutrition needs. Most providers have a form that your physician can complete. Remember, the more information your child care provider has, the better able they will be to care for your child.

This statement should include:

- The food(s) to which the child is allergic,
- The food(s) to remove from the child's diet, and
- The food(s) to substitute in the child's diet.
- A description of symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Steps to take to respond to accidental exposure.



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3. Help plan, with your provider, the steps needed to prevent accidental exposure. Create an action plan using the information from the physician's statement in case an accident occurs and your child needs immediate attention. If your child requires the use of epinephrine or antihistamine in an allergic reaction, make sure your child care provider has these supplies on hand.
4. If your child is old enough, help him or her understand why some foods must be avoided.
5. Help your child care provider with ideas for easy food substitutions for common menu items that your child must avoid. Volunteer to help with special events and celebrations to help prevent your child's accidental exposure to the food allergen.

