

# THE 411 ON FOOD ALLERGIES: WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

## FOOD ALLERGIES ARE REAL AND SERIOUS

Food allergies happen when your body has a negative response to a type of food. Reactions can range from voice hoarseness, hives and vomiting, to life-threatening anaphylaxis.

## COMMON CULPRITS

While any food can cause an allergic reaction, the most common food allergens in the United States are peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, milk, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, and sesame—known as the “Top 9.”

## FOOD ALLERGIES ARE INCREASING

Did you know that there are usually two friends with food allergies in every classroom? You might not see it because food allergies are invisible until someone has a reaction, but they’re always on children’s minds. We can all be aware of this to help keep our students safe.

## NO CURE EXISTS FOR FOOD ALLERGIES

There isn’t a cure for food allergies—yet. A limited number of treatment options are becoming available.

## ALWAYS HAVE AN ACTION PLAN

An allergist will create an allergy action plan that outlines what to do in case of a reaction. The action plan should be shared with caregivers, teachers, coaches, coworkers, and anyone who cares for a child.

## BE MINDFUL AND CREATE ALLERGY-FREE SPACES

It can be hard to live with food allergies. You can help protect and include friends with food allergies by choosing safe foods and restaurants or celebrating in ways that don’t involve food, such as fun games, movies, and crafts.

## FOOD ALLERGIES ARE ALWAYS TOP OF MIND

Children with food allergies are always thinking about how to stay safe from their allergens. They scan for allergens while at school, on the playground, and at parties so they can avoid exposure. This level of constant alertness can be tiring, and it helps to have grown-ups and friends who help to keep spaces safe.

## ALLERGY-FRIENDLY FOODS ARE DELICIOUS

Now more than ever, there are safe snacks, substitutes, and yummy recipes to help you enjoy safe foods with your friends and family. Ask your kids, who may have an allergy to join you in the kitchen or if you have an allergy, ask your kids to join you in learning about safe swaps!

To learn more about food allergies and take action,  
visit [www.foodallergyfund.org](http://www.foodallergyfund.org).