

Food Allergy Facts for Kids Grades K-3

Talking Points for Power Point Presentation



Slide 2

Many adults and children have allergies. People can be allergic to tree pollen, bee stings, cats, dogs, medicine, poison ivy and sometimes even food. Maybe you know someone with allergies. Maybe you have an allergy. Today we are going to learn about one type of allergy: food allergies.

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Both adults and children can have food allergies. About 6 million children have food allergies! That's about 2 kids in every classroom. Chances are that 1 or more students in your classroom have a food allergy.

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What exactly is a food allergy? Here is a simple explanation. The human body has many systems to help it work well. Each system has a special job to do. Your immune system is in charge of defending your body against germs and other dangerous things that can make you sick. Sometimes the immune system will make a mistake and defend the body against food. When this mistake happens, it is called a food allergy.

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If someone eats a food they are allergic to, the immune system will try to defend the body and an allergic reaction will happen. Allergic reactions are an emergency. Allergic Reactions can be deadly. If someone is having an allergic reaction they need to receive help right away. Here are some warning signs that someone is having an allergic reaction: they have an itchy mouth, they have a rash, they get itchy raised hives, their throat feels tight, they have a hard time breathing. If you think someone is having an allergic reaction you should tell an adult right away. If you can't find an adult, you should call 911.

Lots of Kids Have Food Allergies



About 2 kids in every classroom are likely to have a food allergy.

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The Immune System

Your immune system fights germs.
Sometimes the immune system makes a mistake and fights food proteins.



Immune System

Germs

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Allergic Reaction

If someone is having an allergic reaction, they need help right away.

Allergic Reaction Warning Signs

- Itchy mouth
- Rash
- Itchy, raised hives
- Tightness in the throat
- Difficulty breathing

If you can't find an adult... call 911



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People can be allergic to almost any food. However, there are 9 foods that most people are allergic to. Those 9 foods are: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy, and sesame. It's hard to believe that healthy foods such as milk, eggs or fish can make someone sick.

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Children and teens with food allergies can visit a special doctor called a Board-Certified Pediatric Allergist. This doctor can administer tests and tell young patients and their family members which foods they are allergic to and need to avoid. A pediatric allergist can also teach patients and families how to stay safe with food allergies. These doctors will also prescribe an important emergency medicine called an epinephrine. This emergency medicine can help save someone's life if they accidentally ingest a food they are allergic to.

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People with food allergies should always have their epinephrine medicine nearby or on their person. At school, some students keep their epinephrine in the clinic. Some keep it in the classroom. And others will carry it with them everywhere that they go.

If someone eats a food they are allergic to, they may start to feel sick to their stomach, get hives on their skin, or have an itchy mouth/throat. This is when an adult will need to administer epinephrine immediately.

FDA-approved epinephrine products are prescribed by doctors. Individuals with food allergies should have access to epinephrine at all times. Epinephrine is the first medication that should be administered when treating anaphylaxis. Epinephrine reverses symptoms and allows time to seek additional care.

When administered, epinephrine works rapidly to help increase blood pressure and keep blood flowing to vital organs. It also improves breathing, relieves cramping, decreases swelling, and helps blocks itching and hives.

Epinephrine auto-injectors are designed to go through clothing and are typically injected into the upper, outer thigh. **Epinephrine nasal spray (neffy)** is designed to be administered via the nasal septum.



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There is no cure for food allergies. It is best for people with food allergies to avoid, or stay away from, the foods they are allergic too. Remember, eating just a tiny bit of a problem food can cause an allergic reaction. An allergic reaction can be very serious.

Avoid Problem Foods



People with **FOOD ALLERGIES** need to **AVOID** problem foods.

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It takes a lot of effort to avoid problem foods. Think about this: If you had an egg allergy, you would probably know not to eat an egg sandwich. But how about a chocolate, fresh baked chocolate chip cookie from the school bake sale? A scoop of ice cream at a friend's birthday party? A slice of pie from the corner bakery? Do those foods have any eggs baked or cooked inside? It's hard to tell just by looking.

Take a look at these pictures. Which food items might contain hidden eggs? Actually, all of these

foods contain hidden eggs. The cookie was baked with egg. The ice cream contains eggs too. And eggs were used to make the top of the pie crust all nice and shiny. People with food allergies need to know exactly what is in every food they eat. **The best way to know is by reading ingredient lists.** Unfortunately, the foods pictured here do not have a food label listing the ingredients.

Avoid Problem Foods



Pie Ice Cream Cookies

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Food Labels offer lots of important information about the food that you eat. Food Labels can tell you how much fat, sugar, or calories are in the food. Food Labels also provide you with information about ingredients. Reading ingredient lists is extremely important for people with food allergies. If there are no ingredients available to read, then the food should not be eaten. Kids with allergies should always ask a trusted adult to read ingredient lists for them before eating any food. Take a look at this food label for a popular candy bar.

Is it safe for someone with a peanut allergy? Milk allergy? Egg allergy? Tree nut allergy? How can you tell? Did you notice the Allergy Information statement warning that the candy may contain almonds (tree nuts)?

Read Ingredient Lists



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It's very important for people with food allergies to ask lots of questions about how foods are prepared and handled. That's because a simple food like an apple can accidentally touch other foods, like peanuts, or touch surfaces, cookware, or utensils that touched peanuts. When this happens, it is called **cross-contact** and it can trigger an allergic reaction. So, if a nice clean apple has **cross-contact** with peanut butter, it becomes a dangerous apple. Can you think of ways that an apple could have **cross-contact** with peanut butter?

**** Guide students to discover that *cross-contact* could occur if the same knife is used to cut the apple or spread the peanut butter on the apple.**



Use this section to print photos of the below items and use as an activity with Cross-Contact Activity Cards:

- Here is a scoop of vanilla ice cream. The ingredient list on the carton says that it does not have any tree nuts in the ice cream. But guess what? It has had **cross-contact** with a tree nut. It was scooped with the same spoon that just scooped pistachio flavored ice cream! This scoop of vanilla ice cream is no longer safe for someone with a tree nut allergy.
- Take a look at this freshly made chocolate chip cookie. The baker did not add any peanuts to the cookie dough, but the cookies have had **cross-contact** with peanuts. How? Well, before lifting the chocolate chip cookies from the baking sheet, the baker used the same spatula to lift peanut butter cookies. This cookie is no longer safe for someone that has a peanut allergy.
- Take a look at this salad. It has had **cross-contact** with tree nuts. When the chef made the salad, he sprinkled walnuts on top. The chef remembered that the customer did not want walnuts and picked them off. Even though the walnuts were taken off, it still had **cross-contact** with the salad and is now unsafe for someone with a tree nut allergy.

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There are many ways that you can help your classmates to stay safe with food allergies. One way is to follow your school's safety rules. For example, maybe your classroom is peanut-free or milk-free. Maybe your school cafeteria has a peanut, tree nut, and/or milk free table. There might be a rule that you cannot eat on the school bus, share food, or start a food fight. Students might be required to wash their hands after eating. By following the rules, you will be helping classmates with food allergies to stay safe. Let's talk more about some of the specific ways that you can help. **(Go to Slide 14)**



Slide 14

Never share your food or drinks with someone who has an allergy. The food and drinks that you bring to school for a snack, lunch, or to celebrate your birthday or other occasion could make a classmate with food allergies very sick. If your school allows cupcakes or other treats to be shared on birthdays or at parties, students with food allergies will often bring their own special dessert. Many kids with food allergies even keep a supply of special snacks and desserts in the classroom.



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You probably know that it's a great idea to wash your hands before eating to remove germs that can make you sick, but did you know that you can help keep classmates safe from cross-contact by washing your hands **AFTER** you eat? By washing your hands with soap and water or a hand wipe, you can remove any leftover food that might make a classmate sick. Guess what does **not** clean food from your hands? Hand Sanitizer! Hand sanitizer will kill germs, but it will **not** clean food from your hands!



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If you think that a classmate is having an allergic reaction you can help by quickly telling your teacher or another adult that your classmate is having an emergency. If you can't find an adult, you should call 911. Do you remember some of the warning signs that someone needs help? Someone who is having an allergic reaction might complain of an itchy mouth, have a rash or get itchy raised hives. Their throat might feel tight, and they could have a hard time breathing.



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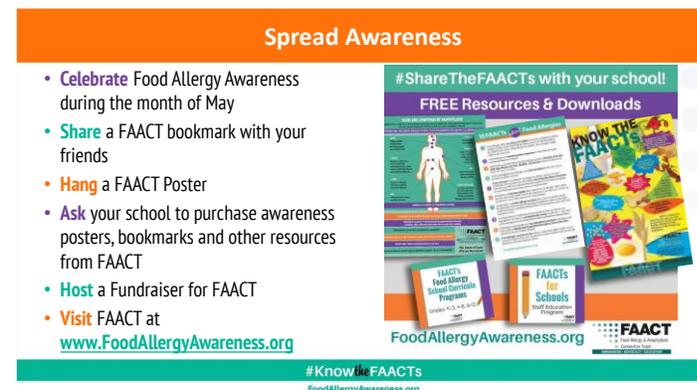
You can also help your classmates with food allergies by being kind. It is never nice to tease or bully anyone. Ever. Why would anyone want to hurt someone's feelings? Food allergies are only one piece of the whole person. It's important to remember that classmates with food allergies are otherwise very similar to you. Classmates with food allergies may enjoy the same sports, music, or books as you do! They might even have the same sense of humor! Maybe they even hate broccoli as much as you do!

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Sometimes your classmates with food allergies could feel left out. They might feel frustrated, sad, or angry that they can't eat the same treats as everyone else at a school celebration. You can help by considering ways to include everyone in celebrations. Here's an idea: When it's almost time to celebrate your birthday or another occasion such as Valentine's Day, choose a store-bought treat with an ingredient list and bring it to school a few days before the celebration. This will give your teacher time to find out if the treat is safe for any food allergic classmates. If the treat is not safe, there will still be enough time to either replace it with something else or for the food allergic students to bring something safe from home to enjoy during the celebration. Remember, you can always celebrate without food! Maybe you can pass out colorful pens, erasers, or pencils instead of cupcakes and other baked goods. Consider donating playground equipment, a game, or even a new book to your school or classroom.

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Now that you know so much about food allergies, you can teach others! Here are just a few ideas: Celebrate Food Allergy Awareness Week at school, host a fundraiser to support food allergy education, or encourage your school to purchase and display awareness materials like the poster shown here. How else can you spread awareness?



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Print the *Know The FAACTs Award* certificate and fill it out for your students to take home and share with their families.



Thank you for joining us to learn about food allergies!

For more resources, visit us at: www.FoodAllergyAwareness.org



This program has been approved by FAACT's [Medical Advisory Board](#) and is supported by



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