



## Off to School with Food Allergies

There comes a time when we have to let our children go to school and you won't be there to watch everything they eat. For many parents, this is the scariest part of dealing with food allergies. I know it was for me. In fact, we started out homeschooling our son for this exact reason. Plan ahead and have clear communication with all teachers, office aides, nurse, school counselors, and the principal. Assume nothing.

Highlight allergy information in bright ink on all forms.

Explain in full detail what the allergy is and what you want done in the event of an emergency.

Provide school personnel with a note from your doctor.

Supply the nurse with any necessary medication, such as epinephrine or antihistamine. Our school wanted this medication to be kept by the nurse in the office, but I demanded that it be kept by the teacher also. If my child went into anaphylactic shock, we didn't have time to get to the office and find the nurse. Time is of the essence!

Have the medication adjusted as your child grows through the school year.

Check the expiration date and supply of medications periodically.

Send a supply of allergy safe snacks for your child.

Keep a batch of cupcakes in the freezer for last-minute party notices. This was a life-saver for me.

Offer to bake or supply treats for class functions so your child can have what everyone else has.

Ask the teacher to share any problems or concerns about how your child is feeling about the restricted diet.

Have lunch with your child at school periodically to see how lunch time is going.

Send a nonperishable lunch to be stored in the office in case your child's lunch is lost or forgotten. A small can of tuna, crackers and a boxed drink keep well (include a small can opener.)

Work with the teacher to coordinate snacks for your child. Prepare your child for the 'special' snack on days when the snack is off limits, and be sure to have a good option snack for your child.

