

Using rescue medicines

Be prepared – carry your rescue medicines (antihistamines and adrenaline pens) with you at all times!

Make sure you refresh your skills with using your adrenaline pen on a regular basis – practice with your adrenaline auto injector trainer at least once every school term.

Contact numbers

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Paediatric Allergy Team on: 0118 322 7224.

Other useful contacts

- Allergy UK
01322 619898
www.allergyuk.org/
- Institute of Food Research
www.ifr.ac.uk/protall/infosheet.htm
- The Anaphylaxis Campaign
01252 542029
www.anaphylaxis.org.uk
- Food Standards Agency
www.food.gov.uk

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
London Road
Reading RG1 5AN
Telephone 0118 322 5111
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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Managing food allergies

in shops, takeaways,
restaurants, hotels
and parties

Information for families

This leaflet offers general advice on managing food allergies while you are out and about.

Shopping for food

Most packaged foods you buy in tins, packets or jars have a list of ingredients on the label. Make sure you always read labels as the recipes and ingredients may change over time.

It is important to be aware that the foodstuffs to which you are allergic may be called by different names, for example peanuts are often called groundnuts or arachis; milk can be called casein on ingredient lists. If in doubt, don't risk it and ask your GP or dietitian.

Food that is not pre-packaged, e.g. food from the delicatessen, bakery or salad bars, does not require labelling. This makes it much more difficult as these foods may have been in contact with your allergy foods during the preparation or display process – it is best to avoid them!

Supermarkets usually provide 'free from' lists. Always check these lists are up to date and check every ingredient yourself.

Eating out

Try to plan ahead when eating out at restaurants, takeaways and hotels.

Telephone them in advance and tell them you have a food allergy and need to strictly avoid any dish containing that food. They may be able to prepare you something separately if they have enough notice.

Explain the risks and make it very clear that eating dishes containing your allergy food could make you very ill. Remind the waiter or manager when you arrive and speak to the chef if necessary.

Be particularly careful at salad bars and buffets where food can easily be cross contaminated by other diners swapping serving implements or food spillages.

Some plastic straws now contain shellfish oil – this is to make them more biodegradable. Please bear this in mind if you have a shellfish allergy and are having a straw with your drinks.

If you are uncertain, do not take the risk.

If you believe that you have been served a dish containing an allergen, despite making your requirements clear, you should notify the local Trading Standards authority in which the food business is based.

Parties

Contact the person organising the party to let them know about your allergy in advance and explain to them how serious it is.

When you arrive at the party remind the person providing the food what you need to avoid and check that each dish is free of your allergy food. Be particularly careful at buffets as food can be cross-contaminated.

For your young allergic child, you may prefer to make party food yourself at home which they can take with them to the party.

This means your child eats only safe food and can enjoy themselves as long as they don't touch the main party food.

As they get older, encourage your child to know their allergies and to ask about allergies when offered food or when ordering food in a restaurant.

Allow your child to order food for themselves while you are able to supervise. This will help them to become more confident and encourage independence.

Make sure your friends and family know what to do if you have an allergic reaction.

Always check the expiry dates.