Your child was just diagnosed with a food allergy. A food allergy is an abnormal immune response to food. It can occur after eating even a very small amount of the food to which someone is allergic. Remember, this is not the same as food intolerance. Food allergy is a more serious, potentially life-threatening type of reaction to food.

Food allergy & anaphylaxis emergency care plan:
Your doctor or nurse will give you an emergency care plan that will explain the symptoms and appropriate treatment for your child. They will show you how to use your epinephrine auto-injector. All caregivers (e.g., grandparents, daycare staff, school staff) must be trained. The more you practice, the better prepared you will be.

Allergic reactions can begin suddenly and progress quickly. Food allergy reactions usually happen within minutes to several hours following exposure. They can be life-threatening. Adolescents and those with asthma or reactive airway disease are at greater risk for a severe reaction. If you know or think that your child may have eaten a food they are allergic to, it is important to identify a reaction and respond to it.

Treat reactions early BEFORE symptoms become worse. Serious allergic reactions are treated first with a shot of medication called epinephrine. This injection should be given in the outer thigh and can be administered through clothes.

When in doubt, give epinephrine and call 911.
READING INGREDIENT LABELS

Learn how to read ingredient labels to make sure there are no allergens in the foods your child will eat. Ingredients can change so you should check labels for allergens EVERY time you use a product, even if your child has eaten the food safely in the past. Learn labeling laws for your food allergens. Avoid items with advisory statements on them. Teach your child that when in doubt, do without, and do not eat the item.

AVOIDING CROSS-CONTACT BETWEEN FOOD ALLERGENS

Even tiny amounts of allergen can cause a reaction. Heating and cooking does not make an allergen safe to eat. Cross-contact can occur, so cleaning surfaces with soap and water, commercial cleaners, or commercial wipes is important. Also, teach children to wash their hands with soap and water or wipes before handling food. Hand sanitizer does not remove the allergen. Learn other sources of cross-contact and avoid them (deep fryers, slicers, utensils, hands, aprons, sponges and rags, buffets, saliva, etc.). Teach children not to share food, utensils, dishes, or water bottles with others.

**Discuss with your health care provider about eating baked allergens.**

COOKING

As you get started, focus on what safe foods your child can have, rather than what needs to be avoided. Plain foods with simple ingredients are often a good place to start. From there you can look for new recipes using safe ingredients. Discuss your child’s food intake and nutrition at each visit with your child’s doctor or nurse. Your child’s doctor or nurse may determine if important nutrients are missing from your child’s diet or if you need a referral for a nutritional consultation with a registered dietitian experienced in food allergy.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Food allergies can be managed. In time, you will learn to successfully adapt. With education and support you can enjoy life and help your child thrive. Avoiding certain foods can be a challenge and these new responsibilities can make you feel sad, angry, or worried. Give yourself time to adjust. Ask for help from your doctor or nurse who can provide needed resources or referrals. Local support groups exist to help with practical tips and emotional support.

Educate family, friends, and school or child care staff who will be with your child about your child’s food allergies. Inform the school and school nurse if available about the specific allergens. Provide the school, daycare, babysitters with a copy of your child’s Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan, two epinephrine auto-injectors, and any other medications prescribed by your doctor. The next page provides great websites to help educate your community.

Teach your child, in an age appropriate way, how to help manage their food allergy. Remember that teenagers have lots of new responsibilities and pressures. Teach them to self-manage at all times and no matter who they’re with.
MORE WEBSITES & RESOURCES
This exact page is also on our website (www.foodallergythrive.com) with active links

WHAT IS FOOD ALLERGY?
www.DiscoveryChannelCME.com/Patient-Education/Food-Allergies

RECOGNIZING & TREATING ALLERGIC REACTIONS
RECOGNIZING ALLERGIC REACTIONS:
• Food allergy & anaphylaxis emergency care plan: www.FoodAllergy.org/FAAP
TREATING ALLERGIC REACTIONS:
• If there's an Emergency: www.AllergyHome.org/emergency
• When to use epinephrine versus antihistamines: www.YouTube.com/watch?v=J3oWNVrOimQ

DAILY MANAGEMENT
READING INGREDIENT LABELS:
• General tips: web.emmes.com/study/cofar/HOW%20TO%20READ%20LABELS.pdf
AVOIDING CROSS-CONTACT BETWEEN FOOD ALLERGENS: www.FoodAllergyAwareness.org/foodallergy/cross-contact-15

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL: www.AllergyHome.org/schools
BABYSITTERS & RELATIVES: www.AllergyHome.org/babysitter
DINING OUT: www.FoodAllergy.org/Managing-Food-Allergies/Dining-Out
TRAVEL: www.AllergySafeTravel.com
DEALING WITH SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL ISSUES: www.AllergyHome.org/Handbook/Table-Of-Contents/Food-Allergy-Challenges

SUPPORT GROUPS
SUPPORT GROUPS:
• www.FoodAllergy.org/Support-Groups
• www.AAFA.org/esg_search.cfm
• www.FoodAllergyAwareness.org/education/support_group_development-5/find_a_support_group-28/#divLTH
ONLINE SUPPORT FORUMS: Community.KidsWithFoodAllergies.org/forums

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
ALLERGY & ASTHMA NETWORK MOTHERS OF ASTHMATICS: www.AANMA.org Phone: (800) 878-4403
ALLERGY HOME: www.AllergyHome.org
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY, ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY: www.AAAAI.org Phone: (414) 272-6071
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF ALLERGY, ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY: www.ACAAI.org
ASTHMA & ALLERGY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA: www.AAFA.org Phone: 1-800-7-ASTHMA
KIDS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES FOUNDATION (KFA): www.KidsWithFoodAllergies.org Phone: (215) 230-5394
FOOD ALLERGY & ANAPHYLAXIS CONNECTION TEAM (FAACT): www.FoodAllergyAwareness.org Phone: (513) 342-1293
FOOD ALLERGY RESEARCH & EDUCATION (FARE): www.FoodAllergy.org Phone: (800) 929-4040

HELPFUL HANDBOOKS
FOOD ALLERGY: An overview (by the government): www.NIAID.NIH.gov/Topics/FoodAllergy/Documents/FoodAllergy.pdf
FOOD ALLERGY FIELD GUIDE (BY FARE): www.FoodAllergy.org/Newly-Diagnosed/Food-Allergy-Field-Guide
LIVING CONFIDENTLY WITH FOOD ALLERGIES: A guide for parents & families: www.AllergyHome.org/handbook
THE FOOD ALLERGY EXPERIENCE (BY A PEDIATRICIAN & MOTHER): www.FoodAllergyExperience.com