



**Kid  
Safety  
Guide**

# Food Allergies 411

A food allergy is the body's immune system's overreaction to the proteins within a particular food.

Essentially, the body reacts as if the food were harmful, prompting your immune system to create antibodies to fight the “dangerous” food.

For parents, a food allergy can be extremely alarming — and at times, difficult to diagnose. According to the Food Allergy Research and Education network, one in every 13 children in the United States 18 years and under have food allergies.

Learning how to recognize an allergic reaction will help you get your child the medical attention he requires.

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

A child who has a parent or sibling with any allergy, including allergic asthma, hay fever, eczema or a food allergy, is more likely to be allergic to some type of food, as well. Reactions to foods can appear within minutes of consumption, or develop several hours later — and symptoms vary.

Symptoms can include runny nose, itchy or hurtful rashes on the skin, swelling of the tongue, lips or throat, abdominal pain and wheezing. Food allergies often are



confused with food intolerance because the symptoms can be so similar.

While food intolerance can be very uncomfortable, it is rarely dangerous and does not involve the immune system.

## MOST COMMON ALLERGENS

While any food can cause

an allergic reaction, some food allergens are more common in young children than others.

The following eight allergens account for 90 percent of all reactions in children, according to the United States Food and Drug Administration: peanuts; tree nuts; eggs; cow's milk; soy; wheat; fish; and shellfish.

## STARTING SOLID FOODS

Babies can begin eating solid foods around 4 to 6 months old if they show signs of readiness. However, every baby is different, so it is always a good idea to discuss with your child's doctor which foods to try and when to introduce them.

You never want to introduce allergenic foods before the foundational foods of pureed

fruits, vegetables, meats and cereals have been established.

However, introducing allergen foods within your baby's first year could help reduce her risk of developing food allergies later, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. The key is checking with your pediatrician as you look to try new foods.



# Outdoor Play Safety

Playing outside is enjoyable for most children, and it's a great way for them to test their physical strength and capabilities.

All of this activity can come with its own potential follies. Here are a few things to keep in mind to keep your kids safe — and you worry-free — as

they enjoy fun in the great outdoors.

## GENERAL SAFETY

Children should never be unsupervised outside and should be taught to stay clear of nearby streets. Stay aware of any appliances near play areas that could be potentially hazardous to young children, including barbecue grills and air conditioning units.

Children should wear the proper protective gear while using bicycles, tricycles, skateboards, roller skates and any

other “riding” toys.

## WEATHER CONCERNS

It is important that children be properly protected with sunscreen in all seasons — even if the weather doesn't feel hot. It is while we are unaware that the sun can do the most damage. It takes less than half an hour exposed to the sun for skin to be damaged.

Applying sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher at least 15 minutes before sun exposure is a great first line of defense.

Don't forget about hats and reminding children to take frequent rests in the shade.

Be sure your child has water to drink close at hand. Sweating is the body's way of cooling off, but kids lose the important water their bodies need to function. Remind them to stop and take a drink regularly — and not to wait until they feel thirsty before taking a sip.

## BEWARE OF CONCUSSIONS

A concussion is an injury to

the brain as a result of a blow to the head. Children are especially susceptible to concussions due to their particularly active disposition and their likelihood of participating in active play.

If your child injures his head, look for signs of being dazed or confused, unusual forgetfulness, loss of consciousness or other changes in mood or behavior. Symptoms may take days or even weeks to appear, so it is important to stay diligent and attentive to your child at all times.

# Fire Safety

Everyone should be educated about fire and behave carefully around open flames — especially children, who can be curious about fire.

## TALK ABOUT MATCHES

Talk to your children about matches and other fire starters and accelerants often. You should teach your kids that fire can be very dangerous and should be respected.

Matches and lighters are not toys. Be sure to store these items in a high location — away from young children. Children also should be kept a safe distance of approximately 3 feet from anything that can get dangerously hot, such as a space heater or stovetop.

## CAMPFIRE PREPARATION

There is nothing quite like camping in the great outdoors — even if the great outdoors just happens to be your backyard. Camp fires are an exciting event for kids, but it is important to teach them about general campfire safety.

Keeping your campfire at least 15 feet from your tent, trees and other shrubbery dramatically reduces the risk of fire spreading. You should always be aware of the wind direction when choosing a location for a campfire, and make sure it is properly contained by large stones — if you are not using a designated fire pit.

## HAVE A FAMILY PLAN

A house fire is something all parents hope to never personally experience, but something for which everyone should be prepared — especially children.

In 2013, 334 children died in house fires, according to Safe Kids Worldwide. It is important to create a home fire escape plan with your family that covers at least two ways to exit every room.

Plan a centralized meet-up point a safe distance away from the house that everyone should head toward so that you can easily assess who might still be inside the house. Then practice.



# Fall Prevention

Every parent knows how difficult it is to protect their kids from injuries — especially falls. Children are naturally curious about the world around them and are constantly testing their abilities without much thought about serious consequences.

Preventing falls requires a high level of supervision, but being aware and taking preventative measures can thwart serious injury.

## FALLS AND INJURIES

Falls are defined by the Children's Safety Network as any unplanned and sudden descent to the ground, floor or lower level, and are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalization in the United States for children ages birth to 14 years.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls also are the leading cause of traumatic brain injury for children ages birth to 4 years old.

## PREVENTION STRATEGIES

There are many strategies for preventing falls that could result in injury. Here are seven from the Mayo Clinic for infant and toddler health.

- **Install safety gates on stairs, and guards on bunk beds — two of the most common areas for falls.** Also put doorknob covers on doors that lead to staircases, such as basement doors.

- **Secure window guards that prevent windows from opening more than 4 inches if you have small children.** A majority of children 5 years and younger can fit through a



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6-inch opening. If you are replacing windows, opt for double-hung windows and open them only from the top.

- **Never allow children to play unattended near or on a**

**porch or balcony.** Be sure to keep access doors to these areas securely locked.

- **Use a bathmat in bathtubs to prevent slips.** Mop up wet floors immediately after use.

- **Use night lights in your child's room and in hallways to prevent falls at night.**

- **Insist your children wear the proper safety equipment for every activity.** This could

include anything from helmets, knee pads, elbow pads or wrist guards.

- **Provide a soft-landing surface below playground equipment.**

# A Lost Child

It is every parent's worst fear: You turn your attention for a split second and when you turn back, your child is gone. According to a report by the Center to Prevent Lost Children, 90 percent of families will experience losing a child in a public place at least once.

Here are a few tips on how to prepare child in the event that he gets separated from you, as well as steps to take to recover your child as swiftly and safely as possible.

## STEPS FOR PARENTS

While you want to do everything in your power to prevent your child from becoming lost, it is even more important that children know what to do.

Make sure you talk with your child about what she should do if she gets separated from you. She should understand from a very early age how and why to avoid strangers.

Have a way for children to identify themselves. If they are younger, have their information in their pocket or sewn into their clothing. As they get older, practice reciting your telephone number.

## A SAFETY PLAN FOR KIDS

Remind your child to scream loudly and run away if he feels threatened by a stranger. Causing a scene attracts attention and makes dangerous people uncomfortable.

Teach them about behavior that is suspicious or unusual. You should begin having these talks when your children as young as a few years old. This can be a confusing concept



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and might take time to understand.

Continue teaching these principles as your child begins to distinguish which strangers they can trust and why.

## SAFE STRANGERS

There are people that children should be able to trust and run to if they feel scared or threatened in any way. Police officers, firefighters,

teachers and soldiers are just a few people your children should feel comfortable around.

Understanding the difference between strangers who

can help and strangers who could be dangerous will help your child get back to you if they find themselves in an emergency or threatening situation.

# Dangers of Cyberbullying

Every child deserves to feel safe in every setting. However, we live in an increasingly digital world, making it more difficult than ever to ensure children's security.

The anonymity the Internet provides has given bullying a new and progressively dangerous avenue through which to cause harm. Cyberbullying can leave damaging emotional and psychological scars that can take children years to heal from.

## THE FACTS

According to the Do Something organization — a global society comprised of more than 5 million young people aiming to promote and affect positive change for their peers — bullying is a rising global issue.

- 81 percent of young people think bullying online is easier to get away with than bullying in person.
- 70 percent of kids report seeing frequent bullying online.
- Nearly 43 percent of kids have been bullied online, and 25 percent have been bullied on more than one occasion.

## TYPES OF BULLYING

According to No Bullying,



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there are specific forms of bullying that are unique or are more common to the online world because the internet allows for another level of interaction.

- **Impersonation.** Digital social platforms make it easier than ever for people to assume another identity in order to bully “from a distance.”

- **Stalking.** When someone is

followed on a constant basis in order to harass them.

- **Flaming.** When two or more people participate in an aggressive or derogatory exchange online.

- **Outing.** Sharing secrets or other personal information with the intent to embarrass or defame in front of a large audience.

- **Trolling.** Intimidating

someone online through immature questions or mean comments.

## BE AWARE

Unfortunately, bullying is extremely hard to prevent. Communicating with your child is a great first step. Be aware of your kid's life: who their friends are (and who their parents are), their interests,

what they like to study at school, who they catch rides with and even lunch-room politics.

Kids should know what bullying is, how to recognize it and what to do if they see it happening. Your job as an adult is to give advice and be available to your kids — and others — to offer support when it's needed.

# Teen Driving Safety

**M**otor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of people ages 15 to 20, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Automobile accidents involving teen drivers often include excessive speed, lack of seatbelt use, driver error or alcohol.

The good news is that accidents involving teen drivers are preventable. Practicing extra measures of safe driving can improve the security of your teen on the road.

## KNOW THE NUMBERS

According to the National Organizations for Youth Safety council:

- 66 percent of teen passengers who die in an automobile accident are not wearing a seat belt;
- 58 percent of teens involved in crashes are distracted;
- 25 percent of automobile accidents involved an underage drinking driver;
- More than 25 percent of teen drivers involved in a fatal crash were speeding;
- 5 percent of teen deaths in crashes are pedestrians and 10 percent are bicyclists; and
- The summer is the most dangerous time for teen drivers. Forty-one percent drive more often for longer periods of time, and 50 percent of teens drive in the dark more often — raising the risk of a crash.

## EXTRA SAFETY MEASURES

Just because your teen has earned his driver's license does not mean he is ready to drive on his own. This is a



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new skill, after all, and new skills take practice to develop. Supervise your teen driver from the passenger seat for at least six months. Some cities are starting to enforce curfews

on young drivers. Even if you do not live in one of these cities, you might consider restricting the amount of driving your teen does after dark.

Talk to your teen about cell phone use and driving. It is dangerous to drive and use a device. Be sure you are not setting a bad example by using your own phone to send

a quick message or email. Children practice what they see. As a parent, you hold an authority that could make teens think the behavior is acceptable.