



www.healthy-kids.info

Ellie Goldberg, M.Ed. 617 965-9637

FUN WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR FOOD ALLERGIC CHILD FOR SCHOOL

Ellie Goldberg, M.Ed., www.healthy-kids.info 617/965-9637 healthykids@rcn.com
Adapted with permission from the Allergy/Asthma Information Association/London Chapter, Ontario, Canada

These games are also fun ways that classmates and friends can learn about allergies and rehearse safety rules necessary for protecting any child with allergies. Share them with your child's teacher.

Safe Foods Mobile.

Draw and cut out pictures of safe foods from construction paper or paste magazine pictures on thin cardboard. Use different lengths of string to attach to popsicle sticks glued together in an X. Hang the mobile from a hook. Ideas: safe snack foods, safe breakfast foods, safe lunch foods, safe fruits, safe grains, safe vegetables.

A Maze Puzzler.

Draw a maze with safe and unsafe foods at the crossroads. The food allergic *monster* can eat its way home safely.

Picture Search.

Flip through magazines or coloring books and find all those things that are safe to eat or do.

Word Searches are fun for older children for make up for each other and for younger children.

A Friend.

Invite an allergic playmate over before school starts. Share safe food treats.

A Poster.

Let your child pick out the photo to use in the emergency alert poster for the staff room or classroom. Let your child wear a *No Peanuts* or *I'm Special* button and put a copy of the button on the poster.

A Collage.

Make a collage of seasonal allergens, household allergens, food allergens, and safe foods.

Concentration.

Use flashcards to play *Concentration*. Match the hidden ingredient name to the food allergy it stands for.

A Diagram.

Draw a diagram of your school and playground showing the location of the child's classroom, medication, principal's office, lunchroom, gym, library, etc. Make and cut out pictures of your child's medication, the teacher, and the principal. Paste these on the diagram.



www.healthy-kids.info

Ellie Goldberg, M.Ed. 617 965-9637

Flashcards.

Drill your child on safe and unsafe ingredients found on food labels. On thin cardboard or an old set of playing cards print words commonly used in labeling packaged foods. For early readers use simpler language and foods.

Paste a small picture of the item in the corner. Another way to prompt the early reader is to color code the cards so that the foods with red dots are not safe, the foods with yellow dots require an adult to read the label and the foods with green dots are safe foods. Older children and their teachers should have the laminated "How to Read a Label" cards for milk, egg, wheat, peanut, soy, tree nuts and shellfish from the Food Allergy/Anaphylaxis Network, <http://www.foodallergy.org>

Puppet Play.

Reinforce the expected behavior in different situations. Let your child take turns pretending to be the principal, the teacher, a playmate, a class bully, and a child with allergies.

You can pretend it is recess or gym, lunch or snack time, a school trip, or a bus ride. Reinforce the rules and guidelines you have for your child. Sample rules: No sharing snacks; No eating food that is offered by anyone else; Know where the EpiPen is; Always wear the MedicAlert bracelet; Always wear the fanny pack. Situations: explaining food restrictions to friends, substitute teachers and other adults; dealing with birthday part snacks; defending oneself against criticism; what to tell the teacher when a reaction starts; the emergency plan.

Rehearsal.

Get an EpiPen Trainer from the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network, your physician or the manufacturer. Practice the emergency procedure on a doll, or a parent, or the allergic child. Practice putting medication in a pouch or backpack and wear it. Use miniature cars, ambulances and dolls to act out an allergic reaction requiring emergency medical attention.

Role Play.

Older children can role-play and younger children can use dolls to achieve the same benefit as puppet play.