



# Preventing Allergic Reactions

There is no medicine or treatment that is available to prevent a food allergy reaction.<sup>1</sup> Prevention is a shared responsibility.

The only way to prevent an allergic reaction is to avoid the allergen (the food or substance that the child is allergic to). Here are a few important hints to avoid an accidental exposure that could cause an allergic reaction:

## Food Allergies



**Know a Child's Allergen** – 8 foods are responsible for 90% of food allergy reactions. They are peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish.<sup>2</sup>

**Read Food Labels** – Look carefully at food labels to be sure you aren't giving a child a food that contains an allergen. Look at ingredients carefully to be sure there are no "hidden" sources of allergen in a food ("whey" can cause a reaction in a child allergic to milk). Look for warnings that indicate that a food is prepared in a facility that may cause the food to come in contact with an allergen.<sup>3</sup> Ingredients can change in a familiar product – read labels each time a food is offered!

**Avoid Cross-Contamination** – Don't serve bulk foods (from common containers in a grocery store) to a child with an allergy. Clean counters, Have separate utensils for food preparation to avoid spread of allergens (don't put a knife into a jelly to an jar after it's been in the peanut butter).<sup>4</sup>

## Insect Sting Allergies



**Avoid Areas with Insects** – Stay out of areas that are prone to insects as much as possible. Wear clothing to cover as much of the body as possible.

**Stay Away from "Scents"** - Avoid using perfumes or scented products. Wear clean clothes (sweat may anger bees).

## Latex Allergies



**Be Aware of Products with Latex** – Avoid latex in rubber gloves, balloons, rubber bands, erasers, elastic in clothing, bandages, hair brushes and toys.<sup>6</sup>



**References:** 1. NIH Medline Plus. Food Allergies: Symptoms, Diagnosis, Prevention and Treatment. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/spring11/articles/spring11pg24-25.html>. 2. Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network. <http://www.foodallergy.org/section/common-food-allergens1>. 3. Food Safety.gov. Have Food Allergies? Read the Label. <http://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/foodallergy2011.html>. 4. Food Allergy Initiative. At Home. <http://www.faiusa.org/page.aspx?pid=406>. 5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Insects and Scorpions. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/insects/>. 6. Fairview Health Sciences. Avoiding Latex. <http://www.fairview.org/HealthLibrary/Article/82555>.