

- When you get to the seat, wipe off the area around where your child is sitting – the tray table, arm rests—and make sure that there are no food residues on the chair.
- Pack food for your child to eat on the flight; it is better not to take a risk and avoid airline food.
- Make sure to carry on your medications. Sometimes security requires a note from your doctor, be sure to have it with you when traveling.

International Travel with Food Allergies

- International travel may present more difficulties than travel within the United States, especially if you do not speak the language.
- Research the cuisine of the country you are traveling to. If the problem food is a main ingredient in the dishes, be sure to bring along enough safe foods.
- If you do not speak the language, eating out can be a risk. This is because you may not be able to communicate questions or understand answers to determine if a food is safe. Bringing a food allergy card in the local language can help.

Camp

Going to camp is something that many children look forward to and is not something that a food allergy should stand in the way of. Make sure you select a camp that is willing to make accommodations for your food allergic child; a camp that you are comfortable with. Below are important topics to discuss with your child's camp.

- Educate the camp staff about your child's food allergies. Make certain that they know how serious a food allergy is and the foods your child is allergic to.
- Make sure there is an emergency action plan in place. The camp staff should know how to recognize an anaphylactic reaction and what to do if your child has a reaction. They should

also know how to administer the epinephrine autoinjector.

- Talk to the camp cook and make sure they are aware of your child's allergies.
- Provide safe substitute foods in case your child cannot eat the foods being served.
- Make sure your child knows his/her food allergies, the symptoms and signs of a possible allergic or anaphylactic reaction, as well as the emergency procedure.

FOOD ALLERGY PROGRAM

Food Allergy Program
 Children's National Medical Center
 111 Michigan Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20010
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RESOURCES

For more detailed information about food allergies, visit:

- The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (www.foodallergy.org)
- The Food Allergy Initiative (www.faiusa.org)

www.childrensnational.org

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LIVING with FOOD ALLERGIES



Dining Out

For someone with food allergies, dining out can seem like a challenging task. However, by following the guidelines listed below, dining out can be an enjoyable and safe experience.

Be prepared

- *Check the menu before you go* – Always check the menu of a restaurant before you go. That way you can make certain there are some “safe” meals for your child. It is always better to know this ahead of time rather than sit down at a restaurant and realize there is nothing on the menu for your child to eat.
- *Ask around for allergy friendly restaurants* – Some restaurants are more accommodating to food allergies than others. You can usually gauge whether a restaurant is going to be safe based on the attitudes of the restaurant staff. If the restaurant personnel are receptive and cooperative, chances are they will try their best to serve your child a safe dish.
- *Bring your food allergy restaurant card* – Show this card to the waiter and have him bring it back to the chef so he/she will know what foods you cannot eat.
- *Avoid risky restaurants* – Below is a list of restaurants that tend to present more of a risk:
 - *Buffets*: Buffets present a high risk for accidental exposure and cross contamination. The serving utensils are often shared, and many of the foods are pre-made.
 - *Bakeries*: The same serving utensils are often used for different baked goods. Plus there is a high risk for cross contamination during food preparation; mixing bowls, spatulas, and cooking sheets can be shared and reused, presenting a high risk for people with a food allergy.
 - *Restaurants with pre-made foods*: These restaurants typically do not have an accurate list of ingredients for the foods they are serving.
 - *Ethnic restaurants*: Depending on the food allergy, you may want to avoid certain types of

restaurants. For example, someone with a tree nut allergy should generally try to avoid Asian restaurants.

At the restaurant

- Sit far from the kitchen – This is to avoid the rare chance of airborne exposure. Food preparation and cooking can both lead to airborne allergens. The further you are from the kitchen, the less risk there is of an allergic reaction due to airborne exposure.
- Make sure to inform the waiter, chef, and restaurant manager of your allergies – Talk to the staff to be certain they understand how serious a food allergy is and are willing to accommodate.
- Ask about the ingredients and how the meal is prepared – Tell the waiter what you are allergic to. Ask if the food is in the dish you are ordering and ask to confirm with the chef. It is also important to inquire how the food is prepared and make sure that serving utensils, bowls, and cooking/frying oils are not shared between foods.
- Be extra cautious with sauces, dressings, fried foods and desserts – these are all great hiding places for allergens. Make sure to ask details about the ingredients and how they are prepared.
- Go back to a restaurant that provided good service – If a restaurant was very accommodating and provided a safe meal once, chances are they will again.

Traveling with Food Allergies

A food allergy should not keep you from traveling although it can make things a little more challenging. With careful preparation and by following the tips below, traveling can be safe and fun!

Be prepared

- Be sure to have all of your child’s prescriptions including antihistamines and epinephrine injectors. It is even better to carry extra medications, just in case. Also bring your emergency action plan so others know what needs to be done if you have a reaction.

- Research emergency care in the area you are traveling to. If there is not accessible medical care, make sure to stock up on special medications and a steroid, such as prednisone.
- Research restaurants and stores in the area to determine which, if any, are accommodating of food allergies.
- Pack safe foods.
- Alert others to your child’s allergy; have him/her wear a medic alert necklace or bracelet
- Carry hand wipes. These can come in handy under a number of circumstances. For example, it is a good idea to wipe off the tray tables and arm rests of your child’s seat on the airplane.

Flying with Food Allergies

When flying, take a few precautions to make sure the flight is safe and uneventful.

- Call the airline ahead of time to see if they can accommodate someone with food allergies. Ask if they can serve allergen-free foods or snacks on the flight.
- It is also a good idea to speak to the flight attendants once you board the plane. Make sure they are aware of your child’s allergy and ask about the snacks being served on the flight.

Peanuts on Airplanes

Airlines used to hand out bags of peanuts on most flights. For the most part, peanuts on airplanes do not pose a significant risk, and inhalation reactions are rare. However, there have been people who have had in-flight reactions, usually as a result of accidental ingestion. So make sure to always have emergency medication available. It is important to inform the airline of your child’s allergy. Most airlines are willing to accommodate a peanut allergy by offering peanut-free flights or peanut-free zones.

If they do not, your child should still be able to fly because in reality airborne reactions on airplanes are very rare and for the most part, not a major risk.