

The
BEAR
Necessities

Spring 2011

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Children's National
Medical Center.

What is a Food Allergy?

Having food allergies (al-er-gees) means your body makes a mistake and thinks that a certain food is dangerous. Normally, your immune (ih-myoon) system keeps you healthy. It fights off bacteria and viruses that can make you sick. So when you eat the food, your body tries to attack it and you have a reaction, or an instant response. The most common foods that people are allergic to are peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. cashews, almonds, pecans, etc.), milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, wheat, and soy. If you have a food allergy, you are not alone. There are a lot of kids with food allergies, almost 3 million in the United States!

How can doctors tell if you have a food allergy?

The doctor may think you have a food allergy if you complain of certain symptoms (simp-tums), signs that something is not quite

right, such as your stomach hurting or getting a rash when you eat certain foods. If your doctor thinks you have a food allergy, he or she will send you to a doctor that is an expert on food allergies, called an allergist (al-er-jist).

The allergist will ask you questions about past reactions or what foods you were eating when you had a reaction. He also will ask about your family to see if anyone else in your family has food allergies.

The doctor may do a skin test. A skin test is used to check which foods are giving you trouble. The doctor or nurse will make a little



scratch on your arm with a little liquid from a food. Different foods will go on different scratch spots. The test does not hurt; it's just a little pinch. If you get a red bump on your skin in a spot, it shows you might be allergic to that food. The doctor also may take a small amount of your blood to test it. The blood sample is sent to a laboratory where they can see whether your blood shows any signs of allergies to different foods. This is another way to know to which foods you are allergic.

What happens when you have a reaction?

When you eat a food that you are allergic to, a chemical (kem-ih-kahl) called histamine (his-tuh-meem) is released. Histamine causes the symptoms of an allergic reaction. Some signs of an allergic reaction are:

- Itchy, red bumps called hives on your skin
- Tingling, scratchiness, itching, swelling in/on your mouth or tongue
- Hoarse voice, coughing, scratchiness, swelling in your throat
- Trouble breathing, wheezing
- Belly pain, vomiting, diarrhea

Sometimes a reaction can be more serious. If a reaction is bad, it is known as anaphylaxis (ah-nuh-fuh-lak-sis). With anaphylaxis, several problems can happen at the same time, for example, the tongue can swell and it can be hard to breathe. Anaphylaxis can be scary, but the most important thing is to tell an adult so you can get medicine as quickly as possible to make you feel better.



How are food allergies treated?

There is no special medicine for food allergies. Some kids outgrow their food allergies when they're older; others have them for their entire life. For now, the best treatment for a food allergy is avoiding the food you are allergic to and any foods that might contain that food. In the beginning, this might be hard, but your parents and your allergist will help you learn which foods you can eat and which foods to stay away from. After a while, you'll become a food expert! Here are some ways kids control their food allergies:

- Carrying a card with a list of foods to avoid.
- Learning how to read food labels. Most foods have ingredient labels that list everything included in the food. The most common foods that can cause an allergic reaction will be listed near or in the ingredient list.
- Talking to friends about food allergies. Friends can help out along the way and be supportive of taking the necessary steps to avoid certain food.
- Ordering meals at restaurants with a chef card. A chef card has a list of the foods and related ingredients that cause allergies. This is a good way to make sure the person cooking your food understands about food allergies.

FUN WITH WORDS

Dr. Bear's Word Search

M V O N W S K I N T E S T E
O O P H T H B O L O D U R S
X R F S T A E F A R L W M Y
Y E A T O M L E M U V I V M
O A N A P H Y L A X I S E P
H C I N C A L L E R G I S T
I T L H T M S Y H R A R T O
S I Y I H I C S I N G S V M
T O T V E N L E C T I I E S
A N R E V E N T I O N E E S
M M E S K R T R N G S E E S
I U E Q D A O C I T I T N U
N S I M M U N E C B C L E E
E N J U R S C H E M I C A L

FIND THESE
WORDS:

Allergies
Immune
Reaction
Symptoms
Allergist
Skin test
Chemical
Histamine
Hives
Anaphylaxis

Answers on page 6



Match the definitions...

Can you match the words to their definitions?

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| A) Allergies | An instant response |
| B) Reaction | A chemical that causes the symptoms of an allergic reaction |
| C) Symptoms | When your body makes a mistake and thinks that a certain food is dangerous |
| D) Histamine | A serious reaction |
| E) Anaphylaxis | Sign that something is not quite right |

GRAMMAR REFRESHER

Noun: Person, place, or thing
Example: Bob, Washington, DC, computer

Verb: Action, something you do
Example: Run, cry, eat

Adjective: A descriptive word
Example: Huge, purple, bumpy

Exclamation:
 A word or phrase expressing emotion
Example: Cool!, Oh my!, Hooray!

Finish the story with the kinds of words noted underneath the blanks. You can try to figure out the actual story, or you can make it as silly as you want – there's no wrong way to play!

Lunch Swap

It was just another typical day at _____ elementary school. The bell rang for _____ classes, and students began their lessons. _____ and _____ sat next to each other and passed _____. The teacher never noticed, she was too busy _____ on the board. "I can't wait for _____! My mom packed _____ and a _____ for lunch," read the top of the note. _____ scribbled back "_____? All I've got is boring stuff. I'll swap _____ for a piece of your _____." He/she passed the note along the floor tiles with his/her _____. _____ grabbed the _____ note off the floor, and thoughtfully replied, "_____!" Lunchtime came around and _____ and _____ hurried into the cafeteria. Once seated, they swapped food. _____ ate his/her friend's food and started to feel funny after a few bites. His/ her stomach started to hurt and his/her skin started to itch. "Whoa!" said _____. "You've got red bumps all over. We need to get you to the nurse." _____ and _____ told a teacher on lunch duty and were taken to the school clinic. The nurse asked what happened and _____ calmly explained that they swapped _____ and then his/her friend started feeling sick and had _____ bumps all over. "You have a peanut allergy," said the nurse as she gave _____ some medicine. "I will call your parents to let them know what happened. You will need to see a doctor to get more information and see if you're allergic to anything else." "Ok, thanks," said _____. "I'm starting to feel better. I guess that means no more peanuts for me." "Or swapping _____ until you find out what you're allergic to," added the nurse. "Deal!" said the two friends together.

Hey Kids! Tell your friends about Dr. Bear's Club!
Go to www.ChildrensNational.org/Publications to sign up.

Answers to Word Search from page 4



Dr. Bear's Word Search

M	V	O	N	W	S	K	I	N	T	E	S	T	E
O	O	P	H	T	H	B	O	L	O	D	U	R	S
X	R	F	S	T	A	E	F	A	R	L	W	M	Y
Y	E	A	T	O	M	L	E	M	U	V	I	V	M
O	A	N	A	P	H	Y	L	A	X	I	S	E	P
H	C	I	N	C	A	L	L	E	R	G	I	S	T
H	I	T	L	H	T	M	S	Y	H	R	A	R	T
S	I	Y	I	H	I	C	S	I	N	G	S	V	M
T	O	T	V	E	N	L	E	C	T	I	I	E	S
A	N	R	E	V	E	N	T	I	O	N	E	E	S
M	M	E	S	K	R	T	R	I	O	N	G	S	E
I	U	E	Q	D	A	O	C	I	T	I	T	N	U
N	S	I	M	M	U	N	E	C	B	C	L	E	E
E	N	J	U	R	S	C	H	E	M	I	C	A	L

Tongue Twisters

Try saying these tongue twisters
10 times fast!

- Can you can a can
as a canner can can a can
- Irish Wristwatch
- Six silly sisters sitting sadly
sawing six silk sacks
- Are our oars oak?

Dr. Bear's Club Poll

What is your favorite school subject?

Circle one or write your own answer!

- A. Math
- B. Science
- C. Social Studies
- D. History
- E. Other _____

Let Dr. Bear know what you think. Send
this in with your drawing contest entry!

Dr. Bear's Club Poll Results:

**What's your favorite
part of winter?**

- A. Vacation 30%
- B. Hot cocoa 30%
- C. Mittens 10%
- D. Snow 20%
- E. Other 10%

Answers to the definitions from page 4

- A) Allergies When your body makes a mistake and
thinks that a certain food is dangerous
- B) Reaction An instant response
- C) Symptoms Signs that something is not quite right
- D) Histamine A chemical that causes the symptoms of
an allergic reaction
- E) Anaphylaxis A serious reaction



ENTER THE DR. BEAR'S CLUB DRAWING CONTEST!

If you had to design a children's hospital, what would it look like? Be creative. After all, it's a hospital for kids! Send your drawing entry, your Dr. Bear's Club Poll response, and the information at the bottom back to us. Dr. Bear will choose one person from each age group to receive a prize and have their drawing and name in the next issue of *Bear Necessities*.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Address: _____

Send entries to:

The Dr. Bear's Club Drawing Contest
PR & Marketing
111 Michigan Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20010-2970

Parent signature (for possible use of art in future publications and projects of Children's National Medical Center)

Winners!

of the Family Tree Drawing Contest



7 TO 9-YEAR-OLDS
Kaitlyn Lee
Age 8
Gainesville, VA



10 TO 12-YEAR-OLDS
Jamar Ford
Age 10
Oxon Hill, MD



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