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Childcare and Food Allergies

Childcare Centers

- Meet with staff to let them know of your child's allergy.
 - Start early – don't wait until the school year starts!
- Provide information, including a WRITTEN TREATMENT PLAN, from your child's doctor about the allergy including:
 - How to recognize an allergic reaction, how to treat it, who to contact, and how to activate emergency services (e.g., 911).
 - Include your child's picture.
- Provide labeled medications and review expiration dates.
- Discuss where medications are kept and who will give them.
 - Medication should be unlocked and easily accessible.
- Review information about your child's food allergy, including:
 - Safe and unsafe foods
 - Symptoms and treatment of an allergic reaction
- Create and review a plan that addresses ways to provide a safe environment for your child throughout the day.

Helpful tips

- Provide your child's safe food(s) and snacks
- Provide "special treats" that are safe for parties, perhaps enough to share
- Stress the importance of increased supervision during snack/meal times.
 - Ensure unsafe foods are not shared
- Young children may grab foods or place toys and fingers in their mouth
 - Suggest increased supervision and cleaning toys
 - Consider washing hands and tables before/after meals/snacks.
 - Hand sanitizers do not remove allergen, water/soap/wet wipes can.
- Suggest "rewards" or "treats" that are not food-related (e.g., stickers).
- Remind staff about avoiding/notifying you about crafts that include food.
 - e.g., wheat in modeling clay, egg in finger paint, food craft projects
- Discuss a plan for: field trips, parties, & notification of substitute teachers
- Consider medical identification jewelry

Childcare in the home ("Babysitters" and "play dates")

- Review how to recognize and treat an allergic reaction.
- Review a WRITTEN PLAN.
- Demonstrate using the epinephrine autoinjector.
- Leave designated safe foods (e.g., labeled) and insist on no substitutions.
- Leave contact information and be available for questions.

Resources

-This program has additional information sheets that you may find helpful.
-Review the "Day Care and Preschool Guide to Managing Food Allergies" from Food Allergy Research & Education (www.foodallergy.org).