

Cross contact could happen when a knife that is used to spread peanut butter, and only wiped clean, is used to spread jelly. In this example, individuals with a peanut allergy may have an allergic reaction when they eat the jelly. All equipment or utensils should be cleaned with hot, soapy water before being used to prepare allergy-free food.

Dining away from home. Hidden ingredients and cross contact are common causes of reactions in restaurants, according to a study of peanut and tree nut allergic reactions in restaurants.

If you choose to dine away from home, be vigilant about verifying ingredients and preparation methods. Speak to the restaurant manager about menu items. Use a “chef card” listing the ingredients you must avoid to inform kitchen staff of your food allergy. For a free chef card template, visit www.foodallergy.org/downloads.html.

Schools, child care, and camps. If your child has a food allergy, it is important to work with school and camp staff and child care providers to plan for how the food allergy will be managed and how an allergic reaction will be recognized and treated.

Carrying medicine. Allergic reactions are never planned. If your doctor has prescribed medication such as epinephrine (EpiPen® or Twinject™), carry it with you at all times. Ask your doctor for a written plan that outlines when and how to use your medicine. For a free Food Allergy Action Plan (FAAP), visit www.foodallergy.org/downloads.html.

Convincing others that food allergy is real is often the most challenging part of living with a food allergy. If you or your child has a food allergy, share this brochure with family and friends so that they can better understand the precautions you must take.

Food Allergy Basics

- Approximately 11 million Americans suffer from food allergy, with 6.5 million allergic to seafood and 3 million allergic to peanuts or tree nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc.).
- Eight foods account for 90% of all food-allergic reactions in the United States. They are milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish.
- Food allergy is the leading cause of anaphylaxis (a severe, potentially fatal allergic reaction) outside the hospital setting, causing about 30,000 emergency room visits per year.
- Approximately 150 to 200 people die annually from anaphylaxis to food, including children and young adults.
- Approximately 2 million school-aged children have food allergy.
- One in every 20 children under 3 years old has food allergy.
- Teens and young adults with peanut or tree nut allergy and asthma appear to be at increased risk for severe or fatal allergic reactions.

Note: Statistics are based on U.S. data only.