

Be A PAL Merit Badge Program



Grand Assembly of Mississippi
International Order of the Rainbow for Girls



In partnership with
The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network



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PURPOSE

To help you learn about food allergies and know how to help a friend who has food allergies.



Do you know someone who has a food allergy?

Scientists estimate that 12 million Americans have a food allergy. That is one in every 25 people.

Children and teens who have food allergies are often with their friends when an allergic reaction occurs. By learning about food allergies, you can help friends who have food allergies avoid risks. Most importantly, you'll know what to do if you are with a friend who has an allergic reaction.

By earning the **Be a PAL** merit badge, you're showing the world that you know that food allergies are real and that they can cause severe reactions—even death. You are also showing that you know how to help someone who has food allergies.

The PAL Program: Protecting Lives

Most allergic reactions occur when kids and teens are away from home and with their friends. To help kids learn how to help friends who have food allergies, the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network launched a national program, “Be a PAL: **P**rotect **A** Life™ From Food Allergies,” in 1999.

If you have a friend with food allergies, learn to be her PAL:

- Know what food your friend is allergic to. Help her avoid them.
- Never take food allergies lightly. That means not joking around about it, or teasing her, or trying to trick her into eating a food that she is allergic to.
- Don’t share food with her.
- Wash your hands after eating, especially if you have eaten the food to which your friend is allergic. That way, you will help prevent traces of that food from being passed along to her.
- If your friend starts to show any of the signs of an allergic reaction, get help quickly! Even if you aren’t sure, it’s better to get help and not need it than not to act fast enough if your friend is having a reaction.

More information about the PAL program, as well as free downloadable brochures and PAL Hero certificates, can be found on FAAN’s website, www.foodallergy.org.

Crysta’s Story

(Age 13, friend of Giulia is allergic to wheat, soy, shellfish, and peanuts)

During lunch at school, my best friend Giulia could never find a seat without peanut butter being to her side or behind her, and she would be forced to sit alone in the back of the cafeteria. A group of friends and I knew this wasn’t fair, so we got a special table moved to the back of the cafeteria where the group of us could sit with Giulia at lunch, so she did not have to be there by herself.

Food Allergy Basics

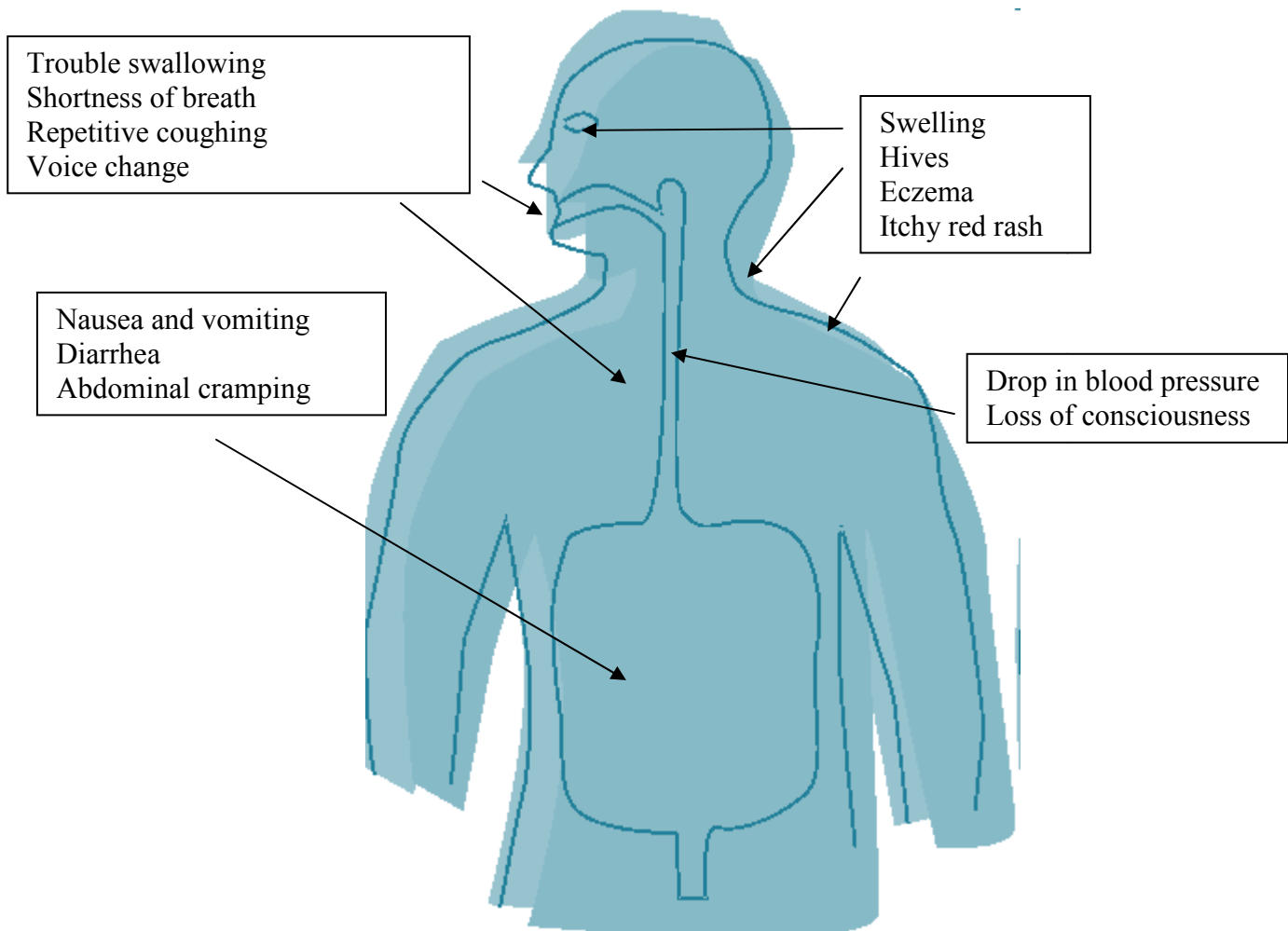
What Causes a Food Allergy?

A food allergy occurs when the immune system mistakenly believes a food is harmful. When you eat that food, the immune system attacks it by releasing chemicals, including histamine, which causes the symptoms of an allergic reaction.

What are Common Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction?

An allergic reaction to food can occur anywhere in your body. The symptoms can range from mild to severe. Additionally, the symptoms can vary from one person to another. For example, one girl with milk allergy may have different symptoms than another who is also allergic to milk.

The following are common symptoms of an allergic reaction:



What Foods Cause Most Allergic Reactions?

Eight foods account for 90% of all food allergy reactions. They are milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (such as walnuts, pecans, almonds, and cashews), soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Children are commonly allergic to milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, and wheat. In adults, the most common causes of food allergies are peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish (including shrimp, crab, and lobster).

What is Anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis (pronounced ana-fil-axis) is a severe allergic reaction. In some cases, the person can die from the reaction if they don't get treatment quickly. Food is a common cause of anaphylaxis. Other causes of these severe reactions include insect stings (such as bee stings) and medications (including penicillin).

Epinephrine (ep-in-eff-rin) is available as an auto-injector (EpiPen[®] or Twinject[®]) and people who have been prescribed this medicine must carry it with them at all times!

How Does Someone Know that They are Having a Reaction?

Some people who have had reactions say they knew as soon as they put the food into their mouth that something was wrong. Some say they had the feeling that something terrible was going to happen. Other symptoms include a tingling sensation on their lips or in their mouth. Then the common symptoms shown above begin to occur. These can occur within minutes to about an hour or so after they eat what they are allergic to.

How Does Someone Avoid Having a Reaction?

People with food allergies must read the ingredient statements on every food they eat, and avoid products that contain the offending food. When they go to restaurants, they need to ask about ingredients before they pick something to order. If they get a homemade treat from a friend, they must ask about ingredients before eating the food. If they can't be sure about the ingredients, they must avoid the food. Since there is no cure for food allergies, that is the only way to avoid having a reaction.

What is the Treatment for Food Allergy Reactions?

Food allergy reactions may be treated with antihistamine and/or epinephrine, if a doctor has prescribed it. Epinephrine is a shot, and people who are at risk for anaphylaxis will often carry an EpiPen[®] or Twinject[®] auto-injector with them. An auto-injector makes it easy to give a shot of epinephrine. There are auto-injector trainers available to help people practice using them, however, they do not contain a needle or medicine.

How Can I Help My Friend Manage Her Food Allergies?

You can help your friend by reminding her to ask about ingredients when you go to a restaurant or by asking about the ingredients on her behalf.

In some cases, people don't think to check the label because they don't think the food would likely contain the allergen. If your friend does not read the ingredient label before eating a product, remind her not to take short cuts and ask her to read the label before eating something.

If you offer food to a friend who has food allergies, save the packaging so that she can read the ingredient label. If the packaging or ingredient list is not available, it is best for her to avoid that food.

Remember that even small amounts of the food can cause an allergic reaction. For example, if you are baking nut-containing and non-nut containing cookies, use separate baking sheets and spatulas to avoid cross-contact from one batch to the other.

Another tip is to avoid putting the same knife from the peanut butter jar into the jelly jar. If you do, the jelly may contain enough trace amounts of peanut butter to cause a reaction in your friend who is allergic to peanuts.

Finally, if your friend has an EpiPen[®] or Twinject[®], remind her to take it with her everywhere she goes.

What Should I Do to Help a Friend Who is Having an Allergic Reaction?

Some kids get embarrassed when they have a reaction. They try to quietly take care of their reaction, or they hope that the reaction will go away if they ignore it. Other kids might go to the bathroom alone to try to handle the situation themselves. This could be dangerous, because if the reaction worsens more quickly than expected, the person may not be able to help herself.

If your friend looks or acts like she is having a reaction or is not feeling well, particularly after eating something, don't let her go off alone. Stay with her. If your friend has had food allergy reactions in the past, especially if she has asthma and food allergies, get help immediately (for example, call 911 or get an adult to help you). Don't wait to see if the reaction will worsen.

Learning to Cook Creatively

People with food allergies will often cook most of their food at home. Allergy-free cooking can sometimes be challenging, but with a little creativity and some determination, it can be successfully – and deliciously – done! Here are some cooking tips you and your friends may find helpful.

Milk-Free Cooking

When baking, milk is one of the easiest ingredients to substitute. Simply use an equal amount of another liquid (such as water, fruit juice, rice milk, or soy milk).

Egg-Free Cooking

Baked goods such as cakes or muffins will almost always have eggs listed in the recipe. To replace each egg in baked goods, use one of the following substitutions (note that these substitutes only work for recipes that call for up to three eggs).

- 1 tsp. baking powder, 1 T. liquid, 1 T. vinegar
- 1 tsp. yeast dissolved in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm water
- 1 T. apricot puree
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ T. water, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ T. oil, 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 packet gelatin, 2 T. warm water (do not mix until ready to use)

Wheat-Free Cooking

Baking without wheat is probably the most challenging when cooking allergy-free. The flavor and texture of baked goods is sometimes a little different without gluten (found in the proteins of grains such as wheat). Combining several flours may make the finished product hold together more and taste better.

Wheat-free all-purpose flour mixture:

- 1 cup corn starch
- 2 cups rice flour
- 2 cups soy flour
- 3 cups potato starch flour

Use this mix in place of wheat flour in a recipe. Use slightly more flour mixture than the recipe calls for. Reduce oven temperature by approximately 25 degrees and bake a little longer than is called for. Store any unused mixture in the refrigerator.

Label Reading

In the U.S., all packaged food is required to list ingredients, and the companies that manufacture food are required to list the major food allergens such as milk, egg, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish in simple language if the food contains these ingredients. Some packages also list a warning if the product may contain a major food allergen (for example, “May contain traces of peanuts”). Your friend should not eat any foods that list a “may contain” warning for an ingredient that she is allergic to.

The following lists are scientific or uncommon terms for major food allergens.

How to Read a Label for a Milk-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain milk or any of these ingredients:

- butter, butter fat, butter oil, butter
- acid, butter ester(s)
- buttermilk
- casein
- casein hydrolysate
- caseinates (*in all forms*)
- cheese
- cottage cheese
- cream
- curds
- custard
- diacetyl
- ghee
- half-and-half
- lactalbumin, lactalbumin phosphate
- lactoferrin
- lactose
- lactulose
- milk (*in all forms, including condensed, derivative, dry, evaporated, goat's milk and milk from other animals, low-fat, malted, milkfat, nonfat, powder, protein, skimmed, solids, whole*)
- milk protein hydrolysate
- pudding
- Recaldent®
- rennet casein
- sour cream, sour cream solids
- sour milk solids
- tagatose
- whey (*in all forms*)
- whey protein hydrolysate
- yogurt

Milk is sometimes found in the following:

- artificial butter flavor
- baked goods
- caramel candies
- chocolate
- lactic acid starter culture and other bacterial cultures
- luncheon meat, hot dogs, sausages
- margarine
- nisin
- nondairy products
- nougat

How to Read a Label for a Egg-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain eggs or any of these ingredients:

- albumin (*also spelled albumen*)
- egg (*dried, powdered, solids, white, yolk*)
- eggnog
- lysozyme
- mayonnaise
- meringue (*meringue powder*)
- ovalbumin

Egg is sometimes found in the following:

- baked goods
- egg substitutes
- lecithin
- macaroni
- marzipan
- marshmallows
- nougat
- pasta

Keep the following in mind:

- People with egg allergy should also avoid eggs from duck, turkey, goose, quail, etc.

Marissa's Friends

(Age 18, allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, and sesame)

My closest friends have always been understanding of my food allergy. They try to make me feel more comfortable by not ordering or eating foods that I'm allergic to. They have also told others not to eat certain foods around me, or to wash their hands or brush their teeth after eating a food that I am allergic to. They take the initiative to accommodate me without making me feel like I am causing a problem.

They always keep their guard up and warn me not to take chances when I am uncertain. Since I spend a lot of time at their houses, they keep safe snacks for me on hand, allowing me not to worry about being able to eat anything. Finally, they have learned how to use my epinephrine auto-injector and know what the signs of a reaction are.

How to Read a Label for a Peanut-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain peanuts or any of these ingredients:

- artificial nuts
- beer nuts
- cold pressed, expeller pressed, or extruded peanut oil
- goobers
- ground nuts
- mixed nuts
- monkey nuts
- nut pieces
- nutmeat
- peanut butter
- peanut flour
- peanut protein hydrolysate
- African, Asian (*especially Chinese, Indian, Indonesian, Thai, and Vietnamese*), and Mexican dishes
- Baked goods (*e.g., pastries, cookies*)
- Candy (*including chocolate candy*)

Peanut is sometimes found in the following:

- chili
- egg rolls
- enchilada sauce
- marzipan
- mole sauce
- nougat

Keep the following in mind:

- Mandelonas are peanuts soaked in almond flavoring.
- People allergic to peanuts may also have a reaction to lupine.
- Arachis oil is peanut oil.
- People allergic to peanuts often avoid tree nuts as well.
- Sunflower seeds are often produced on equipment shared with peanuts.

How to Read a Label for a Tree Nut-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain tree nuts or any of these ingredients:

- Almonds
- Artificial nuts
- Brazil nuts
- Caponata
- Cashews
- Chestnuts
- Filbert/hazelnuts
- Gianduja (a nut mixture found in some chocolate)
- Hickory nuts
- Macadamia nuts
- Marzipan/almond paste
- Nan-gai nuts
- Natural nut extract (i.e., almond, walnut)
- Nougat
- Nut butters (i.e. cashew butter)
- Nut meal
- Nut oil
- Nut paste (i.e. almond paste)
- Nut pieces
- Pecans (Mashuga nuts)
- Pesto
- Pine nuts (also referred to as Indian, pinon, pinyon, pignoli, pignolia, and pignon nuts)
- Pistachios
- Walnuts

Keep the following in mind:

- Manelona are peanuts soaked in almond flavoring.
- Mortadella may contain pistachios.
- Natural and artificial flavoring may contain tree nuts.
- Experts advise patients allergic to tree nuts to avoid peanuts as well.
- Talk to your doctor if you find other nuts not listed here.

Margo's Friends

(Age 14, allergic to peanuts and tree nuts)

Right before every field trip, my super-organized friend goes through a checklist to make sure that our group has everything. The most helpful part of her list is the part that says "Margot's EpiPen®." Her list reminds me to check to make sure that I have everything, but it also tells me that my friends know what I have what I need, and if I need help, they know where to find it.

How to Read a Label for a Soy-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain soy or any of these ingredients:

- edamame
- miso
- natto
- shoyu
- soy (*soy albumin, soy cheese, soy fiber, soy flour, soy grits, soy ice cream, soy milk, soy nuts, soy sprouts, soy yogurt*)
- soya
- soybean (*curd, granules*)
- soy protein (*concentrate, hydrolyzed, isolate*)
- soy sauce
- tamari
- tempeh
- textured vegetable protein (*TVP*)
- tofu

Soy is sometimes found in the following:

- Asian cuisine
- vegetable broth
- vegetable gum
- vegetable starch

Keep the following in mind:

- **Most people allergic to soy** can safely eat soy oil that has been highly refined (*not* cold pressed, expeller pressed, or extruded soybean oil), and soy lecithin.

How to Read a Label for a Wheat-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain wheat or any of these ingredients:

- bread crumbs
- bulgur
- cereal extract
- club wheat
- couscous
- cracker meal
- durum
- einkorn
- emmer
- farina
- flour (*all purpose, bread, cake, durum, enriched, graham, high gluten, high protein, instant, pastry, self-rising, soft wheat, steel ground, stone ground, whole wheat*)
- *whole wheat berries*
- hydrolyzed wheat protein
- Kamut
- matzoh, matzoh meal (*also spelled as matzo, matzah, or matza*)
- pasta
- seitan
- semolina
- spelt
- sprouted wheat
- triticale
- vital wheat gluten
- wheat (*bran, durum, germ, gluten, grass, malt, sprouts, starch*)
- wheat bran hydrolysate
- wheat germ oil
- wheat grass
- wheat protein isolate

Wheat is sometimes found in the following:

- glucose syrup
- soy sauce
- surimi
- starch (*gelatinized starch, modified starch, modified food starch, vegetable starch*)

How to Read a Label for a Shellfish-Free Diet

Avoid foods that contain shellfish or any of these ingredients:

- crab
- crawfish (*crayfish, ecrevisse*)
- lobster (*langouste, langoustine, scampo, coral, tomalley*)
- prawn
- shrimp (*crevette*)

People with shellfish allergy sometimes also avoid these ingredients:

- squid (*calamari*)
- abalone
- clams (*cherrystone, littleneck, pismo, quahog*)
- cockle (*periwinkle, sea urchin*)
- mussels
- octopus
- oysters
- snails (*escargot*)

Shellfish are sometimes found in the following:

- bouillabaisse
- cuttlefish ink
- fish stock
- seafood flavoring (*e.g., crab or clam extract*)
- surimi

Keep the following in mind:

- For some people, a reaction may occur from inhaling cooking vapors or from handling fish or shellfish.
- Any food served in a seafood restaurant may contain shellfish protein due to cross-contact.

Be A PAL Merit Badge Requirements

A Rainbow Girl must have completed 7 of the 14 requirements to earn the BE A PAL merit badge.

Requirement One: Imagine That

Someone who has a food allergy must avoid any trace of the food to which they are allergic. Imagine you are allergic to milk and you could get really sick if you ate or drank anything that contained milk. Read the label of every food you eat for one entire day. Design a handout and make a presentation at an Assembly meeting about your experience. Include in your presentation your thoughts and answers on the following questions:

- What foods did you find with milk as an ingredient?
- What foods surprised you as having milk as an ingredient?
- How did you feel after doing this for an entire day?
- Were there any situations you had to handle differently?
- How would you feel if you had to avoid milk all the time?

Requirement Two: Allergist Wanted

Interview an allergist or people who work in an allergist's office to find out how they take care of patients who have food allergies. Design a promotional flier for an allergy clinic and present it at your next Assembly meeting.

Requirement Three: Be a Menu Planner

Imagine that one of the Grand Officers was allergic to peanuts and she is planning to attend the Grandie Camp overnight retreat. With a group of three or four other members, plan menus to ensure that she would be able to eat everything. List some alternatives to foods that traditionally contain peanuts, such as trail mix or granola bars.

Requirement Four: Cake and Candles Celebration

Pretend that you are planning a birthday party and one of your party guests is allergic to eggs. Design a party invitation that outlines what foods you will serve, and the activities your guests can enjoy, ensuring that everything is egg-free and that all of your guests can participate.

Requirement Five: Let's Do Lunch

Take a lunchroom survey to see what other students are eating for lunch. How many lunches contained a common food allergen? What, if any, special precautions could be made to keep students with food allergies safe in the lunchroom? Create a poster with your ideas and share it, along with your survey results, with your Assembly.

Requirement Six: Make a Difference

Imagine you are having lunch with a friend who has an allergy to food, and she feels sick after eating. What would you do? How would you get help? Make a poster listing the common symptoms of an allergic reaction and how to help someone who is having an allergic reaction. Share your poster with your local Assembly.

Requirement Seven: Balancing Act

Dietitians are health care providers who work with patients to evaluate their diets to ensure that they are getting proper nutrition. Use the Internet to learn more about dietitians. Interview a dietitian to find out how they might be able to help someone who has multiple food allergies. Make a poster of your discoveries and present it to your Assembly.

Requirement Eight: Write a Skit

With three or four other members, write a short skit about meeting a new friend who has a food allergy. Include three ways that someone can help a friend who has a food allergy. Present your skit to members of your Assembly.

Requirement Nine: Share Your Surprise

Packaged food can sometimes contain ingredients you would not expect to find in that food. Read labels for some packaged food items in your pantry. Did you find any that contained common food allergens such as milk, soy, or peanuts? Share your findings with your local Assembly and show three examples of common food allergens that were found where you would not expect.

Requirement Ten: Just the Facts, Only the Facts

Use the Internet to gauge how food allergies are portrayed in the media. Are the stories positive? Negative? How would you feel about some of these stories if you had a food allergy? Write up a mock newsletter article that gives readers facts about food allergies and tells them how they can help someone who has a food allergy.

Requirement Eleven: Educate Others

Prepare and give a presentation about food allergies at a statewide event. Make a presentation board that teaches others what a food allergy is, and symptoms of an allergic reaction. Bring examples of packaged food items that contain surprise ingredients. Ask people if they can guess what the allergy surprises in these packaged foods might be.

Requirement Twelve: Creative Cooking

Cooking without certain foods can take creativity. Select a recipe that contains milk and adapt it to be milk-free. Try the adapted recipe and serve it at a Rainbow meeting. How did it taste? How did the other girls like it?

Requirement Thirteen: The Proof is in the Pudding

Watch how someone prepares food at home. See if you can identify examples of how cross-contact occurs. Jot down some ways to help make the food preparation safer for someone who has food allergies. Present your findings at a local Assembly meeting.

Requirement Fourteen: To Be or Not to Be - In Research

Many scientists are studying the cause and treatment of food allergies. Read highlights from current food allergy research at www.foodallergy.org. Give a presentation to your local Assembly to update them on this research.

Lisa's Story

(Age 16, allergic to milk)

I can remember one time recently that a friend was of great help in ending a situation that could have been disastrous.

I was on a trip with three other girls from my dance studio. My mom made taco salad one night. We were all starving after a long day of dance class, but I made sure to serve myself first to avoid cross-contact. After we had all had our first serving, most of us went back for seconds. As I was absentmindedly putting more chips on my plate, another girl saw some cheese in the chips bag. She quickly showed me what she saw.

I felt kind of stupid for not paying attention to what I was doing, but I was so grateful that she was aware of my food allergies. She saved me from a reaction that could have been fatal.

So, as you can see, friends can be a great help with your allergies. They can help look out for you and see things that you don't notice.

Other Sources of Information

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FOOD ALLERGIES, CONTACT:

The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network
11781 Lee Jackson Highway, Suite 160
Fairfax, VA 22033
(800) 929-4040
www.foodallergy.org
www.faankids.org
www.faanteen.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES, CONTACT:

Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America
1233 20th Street NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20036
(800) 7ASTHMA
www.aafa.org

Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of
Asthmatics
2751 Prosperity Dr.
Suite 150
Fairfax, VA 22030
(800) 878-4403
www.aanma.org

TO FIND A BOARD-CERTIFIED ALLERGIST, CONTACT:

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma
& Immunology
555 East Wells Street
Suite 1100
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(800) 822-ASMA
www.aaaai.org

The American College of Allergy, Asthma
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85 West Algonquin Road
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