



—the food allergy app that puts peace of mind in your pocket

Food label reading is hard — ingredients lists can be long, the typeface can be small and hard to see, store lighting may be dim, it takes time — but necessary. Your child’s wellbeing depends on your diligence and accuracy.

When your child is small, it’s your responsibility to read food labels at the store, when you put the food away at home, and again before you use it to prepare a meal. As your child grows, you will want to teach them how to accurately read and interpret food labels for their allergens, just like you do, every time they buy a packaged food item.

Approaches to help you:

Empower Your Child With



Food Label Reading Skills

When we get it right, we empower our children with food allergies with the habits, knowledge, and know-how they need to stay safe. We give them the ability to tap into all of it at the right time, in the right way, when it really matters, loving them by letting go.

*(✓) denotes early start



Brought to you by the Allergy Force food allergy app — we put peace of mind in your pocket

Empowering Your Child: Food Label Reading Skills

Teaching FOOD LABEL READING SKILLS: <i>Verbalize, Model, Explain, Role Play, Practice & Practice</i>	0-12 months	Toddler to Preschool	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Model reading a packaged food label each time you shop for groceries, even for foods you have bought & eaten safely before. For littles, verbalize what you are doing and why.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Model (explain/instruct {as age appropriate}) the 'Read 3 Times Rule': (1) At the grocery store, (2) Again at home before putting it away, (3) A final time before eating it. Include siblings, too.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Encourage label reading as part of your child's imaginary play (like playing 'Kitchen' or 'Grocery Store.'). Stock their pretend 'pantry' with {real} empty packaged food boxes with labels.		✓	✓		
Model (explain/instruct {as age appropriate}) how to try new packaged food products you deem safe to consume. E.g., Make it a rule that they only eat new foods for the 1 st time at home, <i>with you</i> , during the daytime {never right before bedtime}		✓	✓	✓	✓
Play alphabet games so they begin to recognize the written names of allergens, like "What allergen starts with a 'P' or 'S'?" Make a silly song. Sing it! Everywhere!		✓	✓		
As word recognition skills develop, play 'I Spy' to find the words for their allergens on food labels. Can be done at the store and at home. Make it fun. Use it as an opportunity to teach nutrition.		✓	✓	✓	
Build food label reading into your behavior encouragement strategies, e.g., Award a star for finding allergens on food labels when you put groceries away — give a prize you've agreed together when they reach X {pick a #} stars.		✓	✓		
As they become more confident readers, make a guessing game out of label reading at the grocery store, letting them read labels and 'decide' if your family should Buy Not Buy Call the Manufacturer for a product. Test their skill level by having them find allergens on food labels that they DO NOT have.			✓	✓	
Actively show and explain the voluntary labelling of food labels and discuss what it means and how your family uses it to decide whether to buy, not buy, or call the manufacturer.			✓	✓	✓
Involve them in manufacturer research calls. Have them listen in initially (e.g., in the later elementary school years), then script the questions to ask together, then practice the script, then make the call themselves with your help until hand-off.			(✓)	✓	✓
Cook & bake together, having them look for recipe ingredients at the store with you & read the labels; having them read the labels a second time before using the ingredients in the recipe.		✓	✓	✓	✓

EMPOWER YOUR FOOD ALLERGIC CHILD FOR THEIR FUTURE

This resource sheet does not provide medical advice. For medical advice consult your provider.

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