



Brought to you by Allergy Force — the food allergy app

## Empower Your Child With FOOD LABEL READING SKILLS

\*(✓) denotes early start

Teaching FOOD LABEL READING SKILLS: Verbalize, Model, Explain, Role Play, Practice & Practice	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 1st time at home, with you, 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 their reading skills develop, make a guessing game out of label reading at the store. Let them read labels & '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 for allergies 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.		(✓)	✓	✓	✓

### EMPOWERING KIDS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES FOR THE FUTURE

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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. Technology can help, too. See [how](#).

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. For important, additional context don't miss Allergy Force's series of [articles](#) on empowering kids with food allergies.



—the food allergy app

The Allergy Force app has everyday features you will use all the time and emergency features that could save your life if you make a mistake. All on your phone. All within reach when you need them most. It's peace of mind in your pocket.

Download for *FREE* for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)

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