

EMPOWER YOUR FOOD ALLERGIC CHILD FOR THEIR FUTURE



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

As parents, even though we might be tempted, we can't keep our children in bubble to protect them from their allergens. Since the human experience is essentially a social experience — from the family unit, to friendships, to living, studying, worshipping, and working communities — it is our job to empower them to live safely and freely *socially*, even with food allergies.

Approaches to help you:

Empower Your Child With



Food Allergy Social Savvy

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

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Empowering Your Child: Food Allergy Social Savvy

Teaching SKILLS FOR SMART SOCIALIZING: <i>Verbalize, Model, Explain, Role Play, Practice & Practice</i>	0-12 months	Toddler to Preschool	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Keep updating your Family Rules. Include your child in the process. Listen. Agree as a family to discard outgrown rules and get your child's input on new rules to add, if needed.		(✓)	✓	✓	✓
Discuss what makes your child comfortable before events. Find out what they would like to do, what would make them comfortable. Listen closely, involve them in the decision, then enable. Model, explain, role play, and practice strategies for navigating social events — with grace — together. Eventually they will independently decide & apply strategies, like: ~Bringing their own special snack, treat, or meal. ~Eating before and just having something to drink at the event. ~Eating something the host (If trusted) has prepared specifically for them & ok'd with you, eventually with your child. ~Planning ahead to eat nothing, then eating a full {favorite} meal when home again. ~Bringing a safe something to share with all guests at an event. ~Making a graceful exit from any social situation that feels uncomfortable, unsafe (calling parents, Uber). ~Completely opting-out of a social situation in advance if it seems too risky, too uncomfortable.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Actively encourage playdates. ~When they are little, be open to hosting so you can control snacks & the environment. Suggest a 'mommy & me format' when you are not hosting, explaining as needed. ~As they develop, build towards drop off playdates.		✓	✓	✓	
Actively encourage going to parties & events. ~Agree a snack strategy with your child & communicate it in advance to the organizer. ~Let them carry their medication bag to parties/events and let them give it to the organizer for safekeeping. ~When your child is younger, attend. ~As they get older, drop off, but stay nearby. When dropping off; coordinate with the organizer to receive & use the medication. If possible, have your child privately demonstrate using the auto-injector to the event organizer.		✓	✓	✓	
Give them a wallet card that lists all their food allergies.			✓	✓	✓
Have your child listen to your advance calls to event hosts (this could be a friend's mom, a team mom, a coach, a teacher). In middle school, develop a script together, practice it together, role play the call. In high school, let them make the calls to organizers when they feel ready {confident}, and as appropriate (think dances, proms, team celebrations, cast/crew parties.)		✓	✓	✓	✓

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Consistent with your family values, give them sleepover experiences at {trusted} friend's homes. At sleepover drop off, let them explain their allergens privately to the hosting parent, show the host how & when to use their epinephrine. Entrust them with management of their medication bag. Back up and support as needed. This does not preclude the need to privately do advance work, speaking with the hosting parent — parent to parent — before the event.			✓	✓	✓
Encourage sleepaway experiences, so they become accustomed to navigating new situations away from you, BUT with safety nets you plan for and prepare in advance with organizers, administrators, program directors of camps, immersion programs, tour operators.			✓	✓	✓
Keep channels of communication wide open. Have the kissing/intimacy conversation and jointly develop reasonable 'rules of engagement' for staying safe. Perhaps approach sooner rather than later, respecting your family values.				✓	✓
Consistent with your family values, consider introducing your child to alcoholic beverages that are safe for them to consume before they leave for college. Better to drink beverages they know are safe vs. experimenting. Help them create the short list of tried-and-true beverages. Consider approaching sooner rather than later in high school, always respecting your family values.					✓
Keep channels of communication wide open. Discuss party do's and don'ts, especially the WHY's. Possible strategies: ~Setting a consumption limit in advance. ~Bringing their own safe drinks. ~Not sharing drinks. ~Drinking from bottles (avoiding cups). ~Avoiding mixed drinks & party punches that could be spiked. ~Never drinking on an empty stomach. ~Only eating food they know to be safe <i>before</i> they go. ~Avoiding eating food at the party unless they've brought it. ~Emphasizing the importance of staying alert, mindful.					✓

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