



Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care

Allergies in Child Care

Steps to protect children from having an allergic reaction

1. Read food labels carefully

10 most common food allergens: eggs, milk, mustard, peanuts, seafood, sesame, soy, sulphites, tree nuts and wheat

Pay attention to the list of ingredients. These allergens must be identified by their common names so that consumers can easily recognize them. Look for the words 'contains' or 'may contain'.

2. Avoid cross-contamination – cross-contamination happens when a food allergen comes in contact with another food accidentally, or when it is present in saliva, on a surface or on an object. Even this small amount of an allergen can cause an allergic reaction.

Examples:

- Peanut butter on child's face when they arrive
- Improper washing of utensils/dishes used to cook or eat an allergen containing food
- Home providers may serve allergen containing foods to their own families, which could easily contaminate the food they serve their child care children

3. Communication with families – families are a great source of information, they've likely been managing this condition daily, for a long time, and they always have their children's best interest in mind. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get recipe ideas from families.

4. DO NOT take chances – when in doubt, do not serve it!

5. Seek help when you have questions or concerns – seek out a Registered Dietitian for further support. Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care Toll-free line: 1-888-547-0535 or email us at mbchildcarenutrition@dietitians.ca. You can also find more information at foodallergycanada.ca and the Health Canada website.