



## **Newly Diagnosed with Food Allergies?**

### **FAACT Is Your Voice for Food Allergy Awareness!**

Facing a new diagnosis of food allergies can be scary and overwhelming. Many times parents are not sure who to turn to first and where to get reliable information. While social media and blogs can be full of information, it is important to stick to verified information from trusted sources such as the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Connection Team (FAACT).

#### **During a reaction:**

Use rescue medication if available. Epinephrine is the only medicine that will treat anaphylaxis. If epinephrine is not available, call 911 and tell the operator that an allergic reaction is taking place and epinephrine is needed. If epinephrine is available, administer immediately and then call 911. It is important to always call 911 during anaphylaxis since further medical monitoring is vital to assess for complications due to the allergic response in the body as well as a biphasic reaction, which is a secondary reaction that often is more severe than the first reaction.

#### **Before leaving the Emergency Room:**

Make sure you have a prescription for epinephrine auto-injectors and fill it immediately. Talk to your pharmacist about proper storage of your auto-injectors and decide whether it will be possible to have extra auto-injectors to leave at home or at school. Understand that, as a person at risk for anaphylaxis, it is imperative that epinephrine is available at all times, everywhere you go!

Have the name and contact information of a board-certified allergist with whom you can schedule an appointment for more information about your food allergy.

#### **Once you are home:**

Avoid your food allergen(s). Total avoidance is the only way to help prevent a future reaction. You and your family will need to consider how to handle grocery shopping and dining out, as well as community events. Understand the limitations of federal labeling laws and the food allergy knowledge of restaurants. Talk to your school cafeteria or food service provider about how safe meals can be served to you or your child.

Notify others of your child's food allergy if you are comfortable. Teachers, coaches, bus drivers, babysitters, friends and family can all help keep your child safe and should be

made aware of locations and use of medications in case of a reaction. Take some time to educate these people about the dangers of anaphylaxis and proper emergency protocol. Always remind them to call 911 in the case of an emergency and not to hesitate to enact your child's emergency action plan.

Understand that your child's food allergies may qualify him or her for disability protections under federal law. Consider whether a 504 plan or accommodation plan is appropriate for your child and talk to your school about setting one up. If a new allergen has been added to your child's list, add it to existing or new paperwork so everyone can have the most up-to-date information.

Be alert for increased anxiety or changes in your child's level of functioning with a new diagnosis. Food allergies can be scary, but help is available, whether through a local support group, an experienced therapist, or just a supportive ear.