

Beyond Elementary School: Managing the Teenage Years

get schooled in
ANAPHYLAXIS

Your child is growing up, but they may not be growing out of their potentially life-threatening (severe) allergies. In addition to worrying, you have been reminding your child ever since their first day at school about how to manage their severe allergies. As they get older, many of the rules stay the same, but they may need to be reinforced as your teen gets caught up in after-school activities (e.g., sports, school clubs), faces potential peer pressure or experiences hesitation about discussing their severe allergies with friends.

While your teen is independent and on-the-go, leading their busy life, they still need to understand that their severe allergies exist, are serious and can be life-threatening. Use these tips to help your teen manage their severe allergies.

- ★ Reinforce that avoiding allergens is still the first step in managing severe allergies. No matter how much they may want to eat what their friends are eating, it is just too risky to share food with friends.
- ★ Remind them they must always have epinephrine with them. It must be a habit to take epinephrine everywhere. This is non-negotiable.
- ★ Explain to your teen that they should feel comfortable discussing his or her severe allergies with friends. Your teen's friends should know how to recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction and how to treat it (e.g., administer epinephrine, seek immediate medical care and then call their parents).
 - » Emphasize to your teen that their friends may not understand the seriousness of severe allergies. Once your teen takes the initiative to be honest and educate his or her friends—explaining how a potential reaction really can be life-threatening—they will understand how serious it is and will be supportive.
- ★ Review with your teen what should be done in case of an anaphylactic reaction, recognizing that you need to be ready for different situations.
- ★ Make sure your teen speaks up at restaurants or at their friends' houses to whomever is preparing their food. Hidden ingredients and cross-contact are risks when dining out, so it's important that your teen clearly explain their severe allergies to a restaurant manager, server or friend's parent.
- ★ Don't forget about latex! Recent studies have found that latex gloves worn by individuals preparing food can shed latex proteins into the food in amounts large enough to cause reactions.

The Get Schooled in Anaphylaxis initiative offers practical information to educate the school community to help those at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions avoid their triggers, recognize anaphylaxis signs and symptoms and understand how to quickly get appropriate treatment and immediate medical care when anaphylaxis occurs.

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