

Teen Guide: Having Fun, Dating and All Things Teen!

get schooled in
ANAPHYLAXIS[™]

By now, you are no stranger to managing your potentially life-threatening allergies. You know what foods or items you need to avoid and what to do if you experience a life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). But no matter how well-versed you are in managing your potentially life-threatening allergies, it is important to continue to use what you have learned, stay educated on how to avoid your allergic triggers and know how to properly manage an anaphylactic reaction if one occurs.

Being a teenager is exciting – there are so many new experiences, and best of all, new independence. Some of these changes can be intimidating. You may find you are nervous about discussing your potentially life-threatening allergies with friends, or even a new boyfriend or girlfriend. Or you may find yourself faced with peer pressure to do something that you know could put yourself at risk. You deserve your new independence – so keep the following tips in mind over the next few years:

- ★ Avoid the triggers. The best way to manage your potentially life-threatening allergies is to avoid anything that will trigger a reaction. No matter how much you want to eat what your friends are eating or share that delicious-looking dessert with your date, it is just too risky. And not only should you avoid sharing food, but you should also avoid sharing utensils and food containers.
- ★ Make sure you have the conversation upfront. Talk about your potentially life-threatening allergies with your friends or a date ahead of time so you can both be prepared.
- ★ You should feel comfortable enough discussing the seriousness of your risk for a life-threatening allergic reaction with your friends. Your friends should know how to help you avoid your triggers, recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis and manage it if one occurs and you are unable to help yourself (e.g., find an adult, administer epinephrine, seek immediate medical care, and then notify parents/caregivers).
- ★ Speak up at restaurants or at your friend's house to whoever is preparing your food. Hidden ingredients and cross-contamination are risks when dining out, so be sure to clearly explain your allergies to a restaurant manager, server or a friend's parent.
- ★ Have your epinephrine auto-injectors with you at all times. Make carrying them a habit. Don't forget it or think you can leave it behind "just this once".