

COPING WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

If your child is allergic to one or more foods, monitoring his or her safety can range from being a nuisance to downright overwhelming.

Along with possibly altering your family's eating habits, you'll also have to educate your child's school, caregivers and the child himself about how to stay healthy.

Be encouraged: As the number of children and adults diagnosed with allergies increases, so does the pool of information on healthy food alternatives.



Your child and your family can adjust by adopting some of these practices:

- ❖ Keep up to date on upcoming special events in your child's classroom or school and send alternate snacks.
- ❖ Rehearse or role play with your child what he or she should do if a reaction occurs, and educate him on how important immediate treatment can be.
- ❖ Create an emergency plan to share with your child's babysitters and school in case a reaction occurs – the proper dosage of medicine to give, where to seek medical attention, whom to call first.
- ❖ Educate yourself and your child by seeking information from your allergist, reputable websites such as www.foodallergy.org, and from books, such as *Understanding and Caring for Your Child's Food Allergies*.

As you eliminate certain foods and ingredients and experiment with alternatives, consider this an opportunity for the entire family to develop better eating habits.

