Preventing Allergic Reactions

There is no medicine or treatment that is available to prevent a food allergy reaction. ¹

Prevention is a shared responsibility.

The only way to prevent an allergic reaction is to avoid the allergen (the food or substance that the child is allergic to). Here are a few important hints to avoid an accidental exposure that could cause an allergic reaction:

**Food Allergies**

**Know a Child’s Allergen** – 8 foods are responsible for 90% of food allergy reactions. They are peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish.²

**Read Food Labels** – Look carefully at food labels to be sure you aren’t giving a child a food that contains an allergen. Look at ingredients carefully to be sure there are no “hidden” sources of allergen in a food (“whey” can cause a reaction in a child allergic to milk). Look for warnings that indicate that a food is prepared in a facility that may cause the food to come in contact with an allergen.³ Ingredients can change in a familiar product – read labels each time a food is offered!

**Avoid Cross-Contamination** – Don’t serve bulk foods (from common containers in a grocery store) to a child with an allergy. Clean counters, have separate utensils for food preparation to avoid spread of allergens (don’t put a knife into a jelly to an jar after it’s been in the peanut butter).⁴

**Insect Sting Allergies**

**Avoid Areas with Insects** – Stay out of areas that are prone to insects as much as possible. Wear clothing to cover as much of the body as possible.

**Stay Away from “Scents”** - Avoid using perfumes or scented products. Wear clean clothes (sweat may anger bees).

**Latex Allergies**

**Be Aware of Products with Latex** – Avoid latex in rubber gloves, balloons, rubber bands, erasers, elastic in clothing, bandages, hair brushes and toys.⁶

The ONLY way to prevent an allergic reaction is to avoid an exposure to an allergen!