

# Host an allergy-friendly party

## Tips on having fun and staying safe

### TIP 1

## Ask, ask, and ask!

Questions for your guests

- Which foods must be avoided?**  
People may be allergic to one food or have multiple food allergies, and they may not be allergic to common foods like peanut.
- How can I make food that is safe?**  
Share your menu plan, ask how to prepare food safely, and which brands may be best.
- Can you bring food for yourself/your child?**  
It's okay to ask guests to bring food that is safe for them to eat.

- Do you have an Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan you can give me?**

It notes:

- The food(s) to avoid
- The epinephrine auto-injector(s) your guest uses
- Reaction signs/symptoms to watch for
- Emergency steps to follow in case of a reaction
- Emergency contacts



## TIP 2

### Buy safe food

- Read the ingredient labels of pre-packaged food every time – ingredients can change. Read the whole list of ingredients, not just the “Contains” statement or the “Free from” statement.

#### Do the Triple Check, read labels:

- 1** At the store before buying a product.
- 2** When you get home and put it away.
- 3** Before you serve it.

**Ingredients:** Milk chocolate (sugar, milk ingredients, cocoa butter, natural flavour), Sugar, Wheat flour, Modified corn starch.  
**Contains:** Milk, Wheat. May contain egg.

- Don't serve products: with “may contain” statements, without an ingredient label, or if the label is in a language you don't understand.

#### Bonus tips

- ★ Take a pic of the label and send it to guests with food allergy, they can double-check it for you.

## TIP 3

### Prepare & serve food safely

Cross-contamination can happen when a food allergen accidentally gets into another food or onto a surface or object. For example, egg remnants on a spatula can get transferred to a meal without egg when you use that spatula to serve the meal.

#### To help minimize risks:

- Wash hands before and after preparing food
- Clean surfaces, like counters and tables, and use clean cookware/utensils when preparing food
- With buffet-style meals, make sure that each dish has its own serving utensil
- Don't serve foods from bulk bins in case of cross-contamination with bin scoops/tongs
- Have everyone wash hands before and after eating
- Make sure guests don't share food, napkins, dishware, cups, and utensils

- ★ Check out fun and easy recipes at [foodallergy canada.ca/recipes](http://foodallergy canada.ca/recipes)

## TIP 4

# Understand anaphylaxis

- Accidents can happen, learn to identify the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction.

### Symptoms generally include 2 or more body systems:



Skin – hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness



Breathing – coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny, itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing



Stomach – nausea, pain or cramps, vomiting, diarrhea



Heart – paler than normal skin colour/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizziness or lightheadedness

A drop in blood pressure alone (feeling faint, dizziness) can be anaphylaxis, and hives don't always appear.

## TIP 5

# Know how to treat anaphylaxis

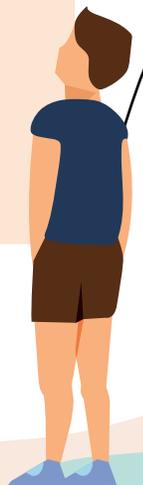
- Epinephrine auto-injectors, like EpiPen®, ALLERJECT® and Emerade™, treat anaphylaxis. If a guest is carrying their devices, know where they're located. For a younger child, hold onto their auto-injectors for them.

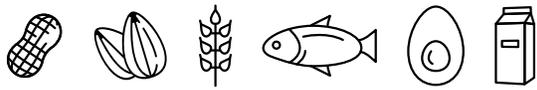
### If an anaphylactic reaction happens, follow these 5 emergency steps:

- 1 Give epinephrine right away (e.g. EpiPen®, ALLERJECT®, Emerade™). Follow the instructions on the auto-injector.
- 2 Call 9-1-1 or your local EMS and tell them that someone is having an anaphylactic reaction.
- 3 Use a second auto-injector as early as 5 minutes after giving the first dose if there is no improvement in symptoms.
- 4 Go to the nearest hospital right away (ideally by ambulance), even if symptoms are mild or have stopped. The reaction could get worse or come back.
- 5 Call the emergency contact person (e.g. parent).

## Remember:

If you are unsure about a reaction, the safe choice is to use epinephrine. Don't use an antihistamine like Benadryl® to treat a serious allergic reaction; it will not reverse the symptoms of the reaction.





# Food allergy FAQs

1

## What is it?

When you have a food allergy, your immune system mistakes something in a particular food (most often, the protein) as harmful. Your body responds to the food (an allergen) by having an allergic reaction.

2

## How much of a food allergen does it take to cause a reaction?

Even a small amount of an allergen can cause a serious allergic reaction.

3

## How fast can a reaction to a food happen?

Most allergic reactions happen within minutes, but some can occur a few hours after exposure.

4

## What can be done to prevent a reaction?

There is no cure for food allergy. Avoiding the allergenic food is required to prevent a reaction. This can be done by reading ingredient labels, taking precautions when preparing and serving food, and following other safety measures.



**Food  
Allergy  
Canada**

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Food Allergy Canada is a national non-profit and Canada's leading patient organization committed to educating, supporting, and advocating for the more than 3 million Canadians living with food allergy.

[foodallergycanada.ca](http://foodallergycanada.ca)