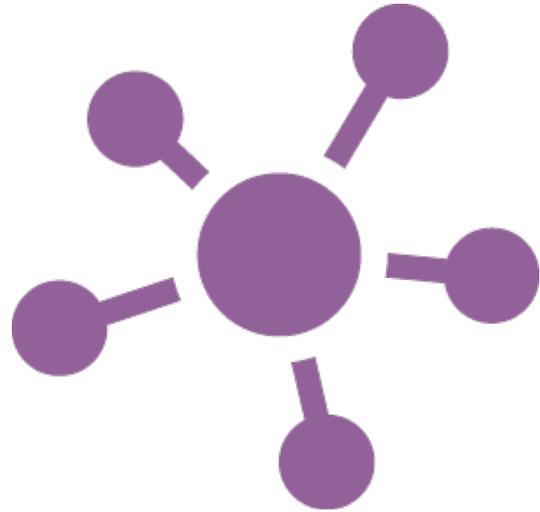


# Allergy Pals and Allies



# Food Allergy Canada



# Parent Guide

A practical and technical guide for the Allergy Pals and Allergy Allies Program

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# Welcome

Thank you for registering for the Allergy Pals and Allergy Allies Program! Use this *Parent's Guide* to learn about the program, including ways that you can help your child get the most out of their participation.

## **Program Description and Overview:**

The Allergy Pals and Allergy Allies programs were created by the University of Alberta's Social Support Research Program, and partners from Food Allergy Canada to help children with severe allergies enjoy the benefits of greater social support. They understood how challenging it can be for children to cope with the risk of an allergic reaction and the daily challenges of allergy management. They wanted to help them develop greater confidence as well as communication and support-seeking skills, by connecting them with other children and older peer mentors who face similar challenges. This program is the result of their work.

Once a week, for eight weeks, your child and other Mentees will connect with each other for Online Support Sessions. They will use their computers and the program GoToMeeting™ conferencing technology to share stories, ideas, and feelings about life with allergies. They will answer discussion questions, connect through creative time and activities, develop important life skills, such as brainstorming, problem solving, and goal setting.

Your child will also be asked to complete *Weekly Missions* in preparation for each online session. These Missions are included in your child's *Participant Activity Handbook*, along with *Get Ready* and *Bonus Activities*.

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**Your child will use a computer to role-play games, share stories, ideas and feelings about living with allergies. They will discuss questions, develop life skills such as problem solving and brainstorming.**

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The more your child puts into this program, the more they will get out of it! You can help to make your child's participation a success, by:

**If your child is uncomfortable using the computer or participating in the Online Support Sessions on their own, you are welcome to sit in with him/her.**

- Encouraging them to share stories, feelings, and ideas and participate in creative time and activities during online sessions.
- Reminding and helping them to complete their Weekly Missions.
- Bringing any questions or concerns your child has about their online sessions, Weekly Missions, or allergies to the attention of their Program Coordinator and Peer Mentor.

**If you, personally, have any questions or concern we encourage you to call or e-mail your child's Program Coordinator and/or Peer Mentor outside of scheduled session time, which we strive to reserve for participant interaction.**

# Roles and Responsibilities

The Allergy Pals and Allies Program brings together many people, with different roles and responsibilities including the Program Coordinator, the Peer Mentors, Junior Mentors, Mentees and Parents.

Roles	Responsibilities
<b><i>Food Allergy Canada Program Supervisor</i></b>	Provides oversight and support from the organization while ensuring the integrity of fulfilling its objectives.
<b><i>Program Coordinator (Arianne Kirkey)</i></b>	Coordinates the program, providing supervisory and administrative support to staff and volunteers.
<b><i>Peer Mentors Junior Mentors</i></b>	<p>Run Online Support Sessions, helping participants to share their stories, ideas, and feelings in safe and productive ways.</p> <p>Our Peer Mentors are teenagers or young adults who live with severe allergies. They receive group facilitation training and informational support from the Program Coordinator, and they have developed strategies to cope with allergies through their own personal experiences.</p>
<b><i>Mentees</i></b>	Participate in Online Support Sessions, sharing stories, ideas, and feelings with each other, and complete Weekly Missions.
<b><i>Parents</i></b>	Help Mentees get the most out of their participation in this program, by encouraging them to actively participate in Online Support Sessions, reminding and helping them to complete Weekly Missions, and bringing any questions or concerns to the attention of the Program Coordinator and Peer Mentor.

# Confidentiality

Your Peer Mentor will keep any information that your child shares with them confidential, with the following exceptions:

- ***If your child or another Mentee shares information of immediate concern***, including information of suspected physical or sexual abuse, self-harm, or violence towards another person, the Peer Mentor is obligated to report it to the Program Coordinator.
- ***If you or your child has questions or concerns that the Peer Mentor is unable to address***, including questions or concerns about the program or allergies, the Peer Mentor has been advised to share that information with the Program Coordinator or other supervisor.

Peer Mentors receive group facilitation training and informational support from the Program Coordinator. Peer Mentors also draw from their own personal experiences of life with allergies while leading Online Support Sessions. They are not allergy experts or medical professionals, and they are not qualified to answer medical questions, including questions about your child's allergy diagnosis, management plan, or treatment plan.

***If you have any questions or concerns about information that a Peer Mentor shares*** throughout the course of this program, please discuss them with the Program Coordinator.

***If you have any medical questions or concerns about your child's allergy***, including questions about their allergy diagnosis, management plan, or treatment plan, please discuss them with your allergist or other healthcare professional.

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Peer Mentors are not allergy experts or medical professionals, and they are not qualified to answer medical questions, including questions about your child's allergy diagnosis, management plan or treatment plan.

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# Session Information

## Allergy Pals – Beginner: Online Support Session Schedule AGE 7-11

	Session One	Session Two	Session Three	Session Four
Topics	Welcome and Introductions	Getting to Know Each Other	Avoiding Allergic Reactions	Treating Allergic Reactions
Welcome	Troubleshoot audio	Pictionary-style game	True-untrue guessing game	Vote on group names
Discussion	Tell us about yourself	Share your mission assignment	What should we call our group?  Where do you find your allergens?  How do you avoid an allergic reaction?	Have you ever had an allergic reaction? What happened? Do you carry an epinephrine auto-injector? Do you know how to use it?
Life Skills and Development	Group communication	Group communication	Brainstorming	Coping with tough feelings
Information	How to use GoToMeeting™	How to participate in Creative Time	Definition of allergens	Description of auto-injectors
Discover Together Time	As a group let's discover some future Allergy goals!  What's one thing you want to do, learn, or achieve by the end of these sessions?	As a group let's brainstorm things we do to avoid an allergic reaction.  At the end we'll make a list together for everyone to have!	Describe and talk about some people you can turn to for help. Who are they? How do they help you with your food allergies? They can be family, friends, coaches, etc.	How can we always remember to take our auto-injector with us?  As a group let's brainstorm some tips and tricks and make a list to always remember!

**ONLINE SUPPORT SESSION SCHEDULE – AGE 7-11 (CONTINUED)**

	<b>Session Five</b>	<b>Session Six</b>	<b>Session Seven</b>	<b>Session Eight</b>
<b>Topics</b>	<b>Friends and Family</b>	<b>Isolation and Bullies</b>	<b>Allergies at School</b>	<b>Treating Allergic Reactions</b>
<b>Welcome</b>	Pictionary-style game	Place the signs and symptoms	Word Search	Tic Tac Toe
<b>Discussion</b>	What do you do for fun with friends and family? How do you stay safe with allergies while doing it?	Has anyone made you feel bad about your allergies?	Where do you keep your auto-injector at school? Are people allowed to bring your allergens to school?	Share your mission assignment  How can we stay in touch?
<b>Life Skills and Development</b>	Identifying and Coping with Feelings	Problem solving	Goal setting	Brain storming
<b>Information</b>	How to create/use an Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan	W.I.T.S. approach to conflict management	Legal requirements for schools re: allergies	N/A
<b>Discover Together Time</b>	As a group: Let's write a "Thank you" letter on the next slide to all the people who have helped us with our food allergies.	As group let's think about the positives of our food allergies!  Think of one great thing and then one at a time answer:  Why do you think it's great? How does it make you feel? How would you share this with a new friend?	Let's all pick our favourite things we learned or loved in our sessions together and share them with each other!	Can you remember your Allergy Goal from our first session?  Tell us about it! What was one thing you wanted to Learn, Achieve, Talk about by the end of these sessions?

**Note: Allergy Pals (Returning)** – Session topics will be chosen by participants on a weekly basis. The topics are:

Session Topic	Discover Together Time
Session One	As a group let's brainstorm what we would say to. say to a younger student in school who was worried about their food allergies at school?  Together let's create a list of tips, actions, and advice you would recommend!
Allergic Reactions	As a group let's make a "friend invitation" on the next slide that we can share with new friends! Include, our hobbies, allergies, how they can reach you, and anything else we can think of!
Allergists and Research	Pretend we are scientists and invent some cool products to help people with food allergies. -Auto-injector pouch -Food tester What else can we think of?
Anxiety	Brainstorm all of the words that come to mind when you think of allergies. Write them in a list, draw a picture, or a word cloud on the next slide
Allergies, Eczema, Asthma	On the next slide let's draw a logo that explains our: Asthma, Eczema, Allergies How do we stay safe and happy? How can they help us?
Birthday Parties	Create your dream allergy friendly Birthday menu and gift bags for your ultimate birthday party! -What's in it? -What's your favourite food, dessert, cake?
Dining Out	As group let's make a plan for success when dining out or eating at a friend's house:
Epinephrine	Design some tips and tricks to help us always remember to take our auto-injector with us. -When we leave the house -Go on vacation -Who can help us remember? -How can we help others remember?
Friends	Think of a time you described or talked about your food allergies with a friend. -What happened -How did it make you feel -Would you do anything differently?
Ingredients Lists	What would you tell a friend if they wanted to learn more about food allergies? What 5 good things about having food allergies would you tell them?

Session Topic	Discover Together Time
Peer Pressure	<p>How can we help each other avoid peer pressure?            Who can we talk to about it?            What can we say to someone who feels uncomfortable with their food allergies?            How can we all be more positive about our food allergies?</p>
School	<p>What are some ways we could help educate our school/classroom about food allergies?            -What would it look like?            -What would you say?            -Who would you ask for help?</p>
Staying Positive	<p>What are some food allergy goals we can accomplish by the end of these sessions?            Always remember – food allergies don't need to slow you down in life!</p>
Final Session	N/A

# Technical Requirements

Participants must have access to certain technologies and programs, including: a computer or tablet, high speed internet, headset or speakers and microphone.

Software includes: LogMeIn GoToMeeting™

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENT	DESCRIPTION / NOTES
<b>Hardware</b>	
<p><b>A computer with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-speed internet connection</li> <li>• Appropriate operating system</li> </ul>	<p>GoToMeeting™ requires a high-speed internet connection for optimal performance.</p> <p><b>Before the beginning of online sessions</b>, participants should ensure they have access to a computer with a high-speed internet connection.</p>
<p><b>Headset or speakers and microphone</b></p>	<p>GoToMeeting™ allows users to speak with each other using plug-in headsets or built-in computer speakers and microphones. Typically, plug-in headsets provide superior audio quality by reducing static, echoes, and background noise.</p> <p><b>Before the beginning of online sessions</b>, participants should check their computers' audio capabilities. If their computers lack built-in speakers and microphones, or they prefer to enjoy superior audio quality, they should purchase or borrow plug-in headsets.</p>
<b>Software</b>	
<p><b>GoToMeeting™ LogMeIn</b></p>	<p>The online conferencing tool, GoToMeeting™, was used to develop and pilot-test this program. It allows program participants to attend online meetings; display and view on-screen files; speak with each other using VOIP or telephone; type text messages to each other in the chat box; and draw on screen together. It may require users to download and install specific software components (e.g. Java).</p> <p><b>Before the beginning of online sessions</b>, the Program Coordinator will register for GoToMeeting™, investigate its latest software requirements, and share this information with participants. In turn participants should download and install the necessary FREE software components.</p>

## Note on Mobile Devices

You can download free G2M™ apps from *App Store* (<http://store.apple.com/ca>) or *Google Play* (<https://play.google.com/store>), in order to join meetings on your iPad, iPhone, or Android mobile devices. However, some functions are currently unavailable to mobile device users – including drawing tools. As a result, we strongly encourage you to access meetings from a computer