

How You Can Be a PAL to Friends Who Have Food Allergies

1 Food allergies are serious. Don't make jokes about them.

It's hard to believe that foods most of us eat and enjoy every day can be harmful to others. But it's true! So if you learn that a friend has a food allergy, take it very seriously.

That means not joking around about it and not teasing kids who have food allergies. Never try to trick someone into eating a food they're allergic to!

Most of all, remember that people who have food allergies need your help to prevent serious allergic reactions.

2 Don't share your food with friends who have food allergies.

Kids love to share or trade food with each other. But for those with food allergies, eating someone else's food can be very dangerous. Never offer kids who have food allergies anything from your lunch or snack. Why? Because it may contain an ingredient that's harmful to them. Even if you think the food is safe, it's not worth taking the chance.

3 Wash your hands after eating.

Just a small amount of food on your hands can get on desks, books, playground equipment, and many other things. And if someone who is allergic touches these things, they may have a reaction. The best way to prevent this is simply to wash your hands after eating. You'll probably have fewer colds, too!

4 Ask what your friends are allergic to, and help them avoid it.

Learning what someone is allergic to is easy – just ask! Finding out if a food is safe for your friend to eat is another story. Here are some good ways:

- Check the ingredient label on every package to see if the food contains what your friend is allergic to.

- Pick places to eat where you know they take food allergies seriously.

- When you invite your friend to your house, be sure there is safe food for them to eat.

If there's any question about a food, tell your friend not to eat it. Doing without a snack or treat is far better than having to make a trip to the hospital!

Here are some other ways you can help:

- To make it easier to sit with your friend at lunchtime, ask your parents to make lunches or snacks that don't contain the foods your friend is allergic to.

- For birthday parties and celebrations, remind parents and teachers to celebrate with nonfood treats and activities, like games, stickers, songs, and prizes. They're just as fun – maybe even more so – and everyone will be safe.

5 If a friend who has food allergies becomes ill, get help immediately!

How do you know when someone is having an allergic reaction? Here are some of the symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Swollen face or lips
- Difficulty breathing
- Coughing, sneezing, and watery eyes
- Skin that's bumpy, red, and itchy

If a friend who has food allergies is showing these signs, inform the teacher, school nurse, or person in charge *immediately*. Tell them it might be an allergic reaction. Your quickness can help save a life!

Someone who's having a reaction may go off on their own (like to the bathroom or outside) so no one will find out. This is dangerous! Go with them to see if they are OK. If it's a reaction, get help quickly!

Remember, an allergic reaction can happen anytime or anywhere. So always be on the alert.

No one knows exactly why, but more and more kids are becoming allergic to certain foods, especially peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish.

Sometimes, if they eat even a tiny amount of the food they're allergic to, they can become ill ... even die!

That's why kids who have food allergies need all of us to help keep them safe. You too can help, and if you do a good job, you could become a PAL Hero and receive a special certificate!

Here are some of the ways you can Be a PAL: **Protect A Life™** From Food Allergies.

Be a PAL Hero!

A PAL Hero is someone whose actions help prevent a serious allergic reaction or even save a life. Your school and the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network will be honoring PAL Heroes with special recognition and award certificates. Someday, it might be *you!*

Just looking out for our friends who have food allergies, however, makes us all heroes. Save this brochure so you won't forget how to Be a PAL ... and **Protect A Life™** From Food Allergies!



For more information about food allergies, contact
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Be a PAL
Protect A Life™
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