



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.*

**Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

## **Food Allergy and Parenting**

Parenting a child with food allergies can be tough. You have watched your child's food and surroundings from an early age. You have also worked hard to speak to others, such as family, friends, and your child's school, about keeping them safe from their allergen(s).

As your child gets older, they will want and need to manage their food allergies more. This change can be hard for families. It takes time to learn how to balance the safety that comes with close monitoring with your child's need to gain freedom and make their own choices.

### **Common Challenges**

- You may feel anxious about letting your child go places or do activities without being there to check their food.
- You may not know where to start. For example, what part of your child's food allergy management you should let them learn.
- Family members may not agree about how to manage the food allergy. For example, if the allergy-causing food should be allowed in the house or not.
- You may be worried your child will not manage their food allergy regularly. Common concerns for them include forgetting their epinephrine injector and eating food without checking the labels.
- Your child or teen may feel anxious about eating foods or engaging in activities without you there to tell them something is allergen-free.

### **How Psychologists Help**

Pediatric (pee-dee-a-truhk) psychologists work with children and families to address the psychological aspects of medical conditions.

Therapy may include:

- Planning to slowly increase your child's ability to manage their food allergy.
- Learning problem-solving skills.
- Learning coping skills to manage anxiety.
- Helping parents learn ways to support their child.
- Helping with other concerns, like your child's feelings about living with their allergy or handling difficult situations.

Nationwide Children's Hospital Food Allergy Treatment Center has pediatric psychologists. They help children with food allergies. If you want to meet with a pediatric psychologist, ask your doctor or health care provider, or call (614) 722-4700.