

The Ultimate Guide to Advocating for Your Food Allergic Child

If your child has a food allergy, you know how important it is to advocate for their safety. This comprehensive guide will teach you everything you need to know about advocating for your child, from understanding their diagnosis to creating a safe environment at home and school.



How to Advocate for Your Food Allergic Child: A Manual for Getting What Your Child Needs at School

by Claire Michaels Wheeler

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Understanding Your Child's Food Allergy

The first step to advocating for your child is to understand their food allergy. This includes knowing what foods they are allergic to, the severity of their allergy, and how to avoid exposure to those foods.

If your child has been diagnosed with a food allergy, it is important to see an allergist to get a comprehensive diagnosis and treatment plan. The

allergist will perform a skin prick test or blood test to confirm the allergy and will discuss the severity of the allergy with you. The allergist will also provide you with a list of foods to avoid and will give you instructions on how to use an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) in case of an allergic reaction.

Creating a Safe Environment at Home

Once you understand your child's food allergy, you need to create a safe environment at home. This includes removing all foods that your child is allergic to from your home and making sure that all food surfaces are clean and free of allergens.

Here are some tips for creating a safe environment at home:

- Read all food labels carefully and avoid any foods that contain your child's allergens.
- Wash your hands and all food surfaces thoroughly before preparing food.
- Do not allow your child to eat food that has been prepared by someone else unless you are sure that it is safe.
- Keep your child's epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) in a convenient location and make sure that all family members know how to use it.

Creating a Safe Environment at School

Once you have created a safe environment at home, you need to work with your child's school to create a safe environment there as well. This includes talking to the school administration, teachers, and other staff members

about your child's food allergy and making sure that they know how to respond in the event of an allergic reaction.

Here are some tips for creating a safe environment at school:

- Provide the school with a copy of your child's food allergy action plan.
- Talk to your child's teachers and other staff members about your child's food allergy and make sure that they know how to recognize and respond to an allergic reaction.
- Ask the school to create a safe food zone in the cafeteria where your child can eat without being exposed to allergens.
- Make sure that your child wears a medical alert bracelet or necklace that identifies their food allergy.

Advocating for Your Child's Rights

In addition to creating a safe environment for your child, you also need to advocate for their rights. This includes ensuring that your child has access to the same educational opportunities as other children and that they are not discriminated against because of their food allergy.

Here are some tips for advocating for your child's rights:

- Talk to your child's teachers and other school staff members about your child's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Work with your child's school to develop a 504 plan that outlines the accommodations that your child needs to succeed in school.

- Contact your local chapter of the Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) for support and resources.

Advocating for your food allergic child is an important part of keeping them safe and healthy. By understanding their diagnosis, creating a safe environment at home and school, and advocating for their rights, you can help your child live a full and healthy life.



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