

Food Labelling and ‘May Contain’ Products

You have been given this information sheet because your child may have a food allergy.

Common allergens that require labelling by law

All pre-packaged food made with common food allergens must be clearly labelled with the name of the allergen in the ingredients list. This ONLY applies for the common allergens listed below.

Milk	Sesame	Soya	Mustard
Egg	Shellfish	Celery	Sulphites
Peanut*	Fish	gluten (wheat, rye, barley)	Lupin
Nuts**	Molluscs		

*Peanuts must be called peanuts – other names for peanut should not be used.

**Food that contain the following tree nut: almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, brazil nuts, pistachios, macadamia nuts must be listed on the ingredient list.

Please check product labels carefully. If you have an allergy to a food which is not on this list (such as lentils, chickpea or kiwi fruit) it will not be highlighted but should be included on the products ingredients list. Please be aware if you are on holiday or buying foods produced outside Europe these rules will not apply.

‘May contain’

Processed foods may have a label suggesting they may accidentally contain a tiny amount of the food you are allergic to. Examples of what may be written are ‘may contain’ or ‘made in a factory’. Be aware of these warning labels especially in snack foods such as chocolate, biscuits, cake and sweets, however these are not deliberate ingredients. Some families choose to eat ‘may contain’ products following these three rules to keep as safe as possible.

1. It does not matter if you have eaten a food before - if it has a warning label that it may be contaminated by your allergy food you should treat it as a potential risk each time.

2. You should only eat these foods when you have your medicines with you and when you can get medical help easily.
3. The amount you need to eat to have a reaction and the severity of each reaction can change. Things that make you more likely to have a reaction are being unwell, exercise and if you are upset. If your asthma or hay fever is playing up this can also increase the risk of a more severe reaction.

Foods without packaging

Information must be provided on allergens in foods sold without packaging or wrapped on site. This includes foods sold at supermarkets, delis, cafes and restaurants. This information could be written on a chalk board or chart, or provided verbally by a member of staff. Where the specific allergen information is not provided upfront, clear signposting about where this information can be found must be provided. If unsure, ask a member of staff.

Be aware that these regulations do not rule out accidental contamination. Sometimes small amounts of the food you need to avoid may have come into contact with another food. For this reason it is important to be especially careful of self-service restaurants and buffets.

Eating out

You may want to contact a restaurant in advance about your food allergy as well as speaking to the chef about your allergy whilst choosing your dishes from the menu. Don't risk eating a food if you are not sure it's suitable. You could carry a 'chef card' to give to the restaurant staff. This will tell the chef which foods you need to avoid.

If you are eating out or buying food from a café, take away, bakery or similar, make the staff aware of your food allergy in case there are allergens in the food that are not clearly labelled.

You can download chef cards from: [food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/chefcard.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/chefcard.pdf)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an auto-injector device?

An auto-injector device contains a single injection of adrenaline. This is a medicine used to treat severe allergic reactions. It comes as an easy to use injection so that the medicine can get to work quickly.

When should I use the auto-injector?

The auto-injector should be used at the first sign of a **severe allergic reaction**. The adrenaline will help stop the allergic reaction so the sooner it is given the better. You will not hurt someone by giving the auto-injector when they don't need it. It is better to be safe than sorry.

How long have I got?

Allergic reactions happen quickly but they are not instant. **Most people have time to decide what to do**. Make sure that you are confident about when to use the auto-injector and how it should be given. **Always carry your allergy medicine with you**. You should keep your skills up to date by rehearsing with a trainer device and watching a training video online at least once a term, or when your auto-injectors need to be replaced. Check your friends and family know what to do if you have an allergic reaction. Emerade and Jext have apps that can be downloaded on to your phone.

Online information can be found here:

www.epipen.co.uk

www.jext.co.uk

www.emerade.com

What will make things worse?

Someone having an allergic reaction **should not be moved**. Even if they are able to **don't walk them about** - get help to them instead. People with breathing difficulties should be allowed to find their most comfortable position; this is often sat upright. Otherwise lay the person down and if possible, raise their legs in the air by putting their heels on a chair or on someone's knees.

Exercise, hot baths, big meals, fizzy drinks and alcohol up to a day after a reaction can cause symptoms to return, so take it easy, rest and recover. Toddlers can play normally but should avoid situations where they could get over excited.

How do I phone for an ambulance?

You can dial 999 from any phone, even if you have no credit. Ask for an ambulance. Explain that the patient is having a serious allergic reaction and that the auto-injector has been given. They will be able to give you instructions on how to help the person whilst the ambulance is on its way. The patient must go to hospital to be assessed and may need further treatment if the reaction returns.

How do I look after my auto-injector?

- Check your auto-injectors regularly to make sure they are in date. Look at your auto-injector's website to get free reminder texts sent to you.
- Store the auto-injectors at room temperature. Do not leave them in the sun or in the car as they may get too cold or too hot.
- If the adrenaline in the auto-injector looks cloudy the device needs replacing.
- If a child has anaphylaxis and the auto-injector is out of date it is better to use it. The adrenaline dose may have reduced but using it will not be dangerous.

Where can I find out more information?

These groups provide useful information, products (like medical alert jewellery and kits bags) and practical advice through websites and telephone helplines:

Allergy UK

www.allergyuk.org

Helpline: 01322 619898

Clear practical advice and information sheets

Anaphylaxis campaign

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

Helpline: 01252 542029

Lots of information about allergy research

Itchy Sneezzy Wheezy

www.itchysneezzywheezy.co.uk

This site has lots of helpful how-to videos

FoodMaestro App

<http://foodmaestro.me>

This free app helps you shop for suitable products for your allergy.

Spare Pens in Schools

www.sparepensinschools.uk

A one-stop resource for anyone who wants to know about anaphylaxis and adrenaline auto-injectors in schools.