



# Grandparents Corner

May 2015

## Food Allergy Action Month

Food allergies are a growing food safety and public health concern that affect 15 million Americans. Reactions can range from a mild response to anaphylaxis, a severe and potentially deadly reaction. A food allergy occurs when the body has a specific and reproducible immune response to certain foods. Although the immune system normally protects people from germs, in people with food allergies, the immune system mistakenly responds to food as if it were harmful. People can be allergic to any food, but there are eight foods that cause the most reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish.

The most common food allergy signs and symptoms include:

- Tingling or itching in the mouth.
- Hives, itching or eczema.
- Swelling of the lips, face, tongue and throat, or other parts of the body.
- Wheezing, nasal congestion or trouble breathing.
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting.
- Dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.

Talking to children about their food allergies:

- First, explain that there are certain foods that can make them very sick. Use terms like “safe food” and “unsafe food.”
- Next, teach them the names of unsafe foods and what they commonly look like. Point out pictures or objects of gallons of milk, cartons of eggs, or bags of peanuts in the grocery store.
- Then, teach them to only eat foods that are given to them by their parents or other trusted adults who are knowledgeable about their food allergies and trusted to care for them.
- Finally, they should know to find an adult if they feel sick or need help. You should also go over any emergency plans in case they have an allergic reaction, which will involve giving them medicine and then going to the doctor.

There is no cure for food allergies. Strict avoidance of the food allergen is the only way to prevent a reaction. Food allergies can begin at any age and affect children and adults of all races and ethnicity. Kids who have food allergies may feel that they are different because of their food allergies, but it is important to emphasize they are not alone

Source: CDC Center for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/>  
FARE - <http://www.foodallergy.org>

*As the caregiver, you should seek training from a physical therapist in order to reduce the risk of injury to yourself or the person in your care. A therapist will help correct mistakes you make and can take into account special problems. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.*

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1. Most muscle strain injuries to both the caregiver and care receiver are preventable if you follow some simple rules.    T    F
2. Body mechanics involves standing and moving in ways that prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength.    T    F
3. Always let the person you are helping know what you are going to do.  
T    F
4. Use your back muscles to do most of the work.    T    F
5. If the person in your care does not move often, they may become lightheaded with a change in position.    T    F
6. If you feel any back pain, you need to avoid activity for a long time.    T    F
7. Keep your spine in a neutral (normal arched, not stiff) position while lifting.  
T    F
8. Have the person PUSH off rails, chair arms, etc. (No pulling).    T    F
9. If, during a transfer, you start to “lose” the person, lower them slowly to the floor.  
T    F
10. Never use ice on a sore back muscle.    T    F

**KEY:** 1. T 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. F