

# NUTRITION BITS AND BITES

## FOOD ALLERGIES



### **Do the *Triple Check* on food products if your child has a food allergy**

- 1. Check food labels and ingredient lists for allergens at the grocery store before purchasing**
- 2. Check again when you get home and put the food away**
- 3. Check one last time before serving the food to your child**

### **What is an allergic reaction?**

It is when the body reacts to a protein or irritant (allergen). It can start as a mild reaction and develop into a severe reaction within seconds. The reaction may be caused by a food, insect stings, environment, or medications.

Food allergies are triggered when the body's immune system mistakenly identifies a food protein to be harmful. Exposure to even the smallest amounts of an allergenic protein can cause a serious allergic reaction in sensitive individuals. This is why everyone needs to be very careful when packing school lunches.

### **What is cross-contamination (cross-contact)?**

These terms are used to describe the presence of an allergen that is transferred from one food or object to another. For example, cookies baked on the same tray as peanut butter cookies cause a risk of cross-contamination to someone with a peanut allergy

### **Substitutes for School Lunches and Snacks**

It is important to check with your student's classroom for an allergy food list. For all students to be safe, schools may request that certain foods be consumed at home instead of at school.

- Always read the ingredients section of the label to identify if the product is free of the allergen.
- Don't pack any food with ingredients that are restricted at your school.

**Remember, even trace amounts can cause a severe allergic reaction**

# Allergy Substitutions

<p><b>Dairy</b></p>	<p><b>Cow's Milk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To replace cow's milk, use fortified milk alternatives such as soy, almond, coconut, cashew, hemp, oat, or rice. These can be substituted 1-for-1 in recipes.</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: Not all milk alternatives are nutritionally equal. Regular milk and fortified soy milk have comparable amounts of protein while other milk alternatives have limited amounts of protein per serving. Ensure the milk alternative you choose is fortified with calcium and vitamin D.</i></p> <p><b>Butter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a dairy-free or vegan margarine. These can be substituted 1-for-1 in recipes.</li> <li>Try using a cooking oil such as canola, soybean or olive oil. If substituting oil for butter in baking, decrease the amount. For example, if a recipe calls for 1/2 cup butter, try using 1/3 cup oil instead.</li> </ul> <p><b>Buttermilk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make your own buttermilk using 1 cup of fortified milk alternative such as soy milk, mixed with 1 tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sour Cream, Yogurt, and Cream Cheese</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try a soy-based or coconut-based sour cream, yogurt and cream cheese.</li> <li>Make your own sour cream using 4 tablespoons of starch (corn starch, rice starch, or potato starch) mixed with 3/4 cup water and 1/4 cup vinegar for each cup of sour cream required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Egg</b></p>	<p><b>To replace 1 egg, try:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial egg replacements (e.g. Ener-G Egg Replacer- made from tapioca and potato starch)</li> <li>1 tbsp ground flaxseed or ground chia seeds mixed with 3 tbsp of water (let stand for 1 minute)</li> <li>¼ cup (2 oz) tofu</li> <li>¼ cup pureed fruits such as banana (~ ½ ripe banana) or unsweetened apple sauce</li> <li>2 tbsp arrowroot powder mixed with 3 tbsp water</li> </ul>
<p><b>Peanut/ Tree nuts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try substituting recipes that call for peanut butter with sunflower seed butter such as SunButter® or a soy alternative like Wowbutter®</li> <li>Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, roasted chickpeas or lentils can be used instead of peanuts or tree nuts in granola bars, cookies, and trail mix</li> </ul>

## Help your child be allergy aware!

- ✓ Inform your child about their food allergy
- ✓ Teach your child to recognize their allergen on a food label
- ✓ Discuss what may happen after a potential exposure
- ✓ Encourage them to inform classmates about their allergy



For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/finding-care/health-info-for-you/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/>

To access previous school nutrition newsletters, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/whats-happening/nutritional-newsletters/>

Contact Dial-a-Dietitian 1-877-830-2892

Health Links 1-888-315-9257

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