



Before enrolling in childcare

Arrange a meeting

Make an appointment to speak with the childcare to discuss how the childcare manages children who have food allergy.

Best practice guidelines

There are national laws the childcare must follow. Ask if the childcare also uses the [Best Practice Guidelines for anaphylaxis prevention and management in childcare](#) and/or specific state or territory anaphylaxis guidelines, policy, or legislation?

Allergy Aware

Ask if the childcare has an allergy aware approach for food allergy management? An allergy aware approach means having many things in place to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction and to recognise and treat an allergic reaction well when it happens. Examples include:

- Staff know who is at risk of anaphylaxis and what they are allergic to.
- Staff do [free ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training](#).
- The childcare has an anaphylaxis policy that is followed.
- The childcare completes an [individualised anaphylaxis care plan](#) for each child at risk of allergy with the parent.
- There is good communication about how the childcare manages allergies.
- The childcare has emergency response plans that are practised.
- Age-appropriate allergy education including helping friends with allergies.
- Reducing risk with actions such as handwashing and not sharing food. More information: [Strategies to reduce risk - Allergy Aware](#).
- The childcare has an adrenaline device that can be used on anyone showing signs of anaphylaxis including those not previously diagnosed.

Managing snack and meal times

Ask about meal times. Do children bring food from home or are meals provided? What does the childcare do to reduce risk for children with food allergies? If the childcare provides food, ask if the cook and staff who prepare and serve food have done free online food allergen training [All about Allergens for Children's Education and Care](#).

Childcare should NOT 'ban' food or claim to be free of any allergen. Claiming to be 'nut free' for example gives staff and families a false sense of security. It is not helpful to those with an allergy to other food such as sesame or egg. However, childcare may choose not to serve peanuts or tree nuts as these foods are not staple foods such as cow's milk, wheat and egg. Speak with your childcare about their policies.

Read the Allergy Aware parent resources

This will help you understand what your childcare should be doing to best prevent and manage allergies and how you can support your childcare.

[What does it mean to be an allergy aware children's education and care service?](#)

[How can families support allergy aware children's education and care services?](#)

When your child is old enough, teach them skills to help them manage their allergies in a way they can understand by:

- knowing what foods they are allergic to
- not sharing food or drinks
- only eating from their own lunchbox or plate
- only drinking from their own cup or water bottle
- washing their hands before and after eating
- asking for help if they feel sick or are worried

! Remember: Communicate in a way that makes the needs of your child clear without being unreasonable. Build a partnership with your childcare so you can work together to reduce risk, manage your child's allergies well and give your child a great childcare experience.

Before starting childcare

When applying for enrolment

- Tell the childcare about your child's allergy when completing the enrolment application.
- Give the childcare a copy of your child's ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis or ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions.

After enrolment is confirmed

- Meet with childcare staff to develop an [individualised anaphylaxis care plan](#) and discuss your child's allergy management.
- Ask how relief/casual educators are told about your child's allergies.
- Talk about how you and the childcare will communicate about your child, especially when planning for special events which increase risk of an allergic reaction such as activities involving food, birthdays, sports days, class parties and multicultural celebrations.

Contact our trained Allergy Educators on the **National Allergy Helpline** on 1300 728 000 or through www.allergyfacts.org.au if you would like to discuss childcare management.

When starting childcare

Meet with staff

- Meet with your child's educator. Check they have recently completed free [ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training](#) and [All about Allergens](#) training. Check they have practised using an adrenaline trainer device and that they understand your child's individualised anaphylaxis care plan.
- Meet with the cook and confirm they have recently done the [All about Allergens](#) training, and you are comfortable with the plan for providing safe food for your child. Parents may choose to send their own food if their child has allergies to staple foods or multiple food allergies.

Provide medications

Give the childcare one of your child's adrenaline devices (such as EpiPen® Jnr) and other medications, if prescribed. Your child's ASCIA Action Plan should be stored with their adrenaline device in an unlocked location.

Help reduce risk for food allergy

- Label your child's drink bottle with their full name. If you provide your own food, also label your child's lunchbox.
- If your childcare celebrates birthdays with food such as cake, ask if you should provide food treats your child has eaten safely at home. If you provide cupcakes, they should be stored in the freezer in a container labelled with your child's full name and childcare room.



For more information and tips about childcare with allergies visit www.allergyfacts.org.au

