

Avoid the Danger of Anaphylaxis this Halloween

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A safe Halloween

Having food allergies doesn't mean having to skip all Halloween fun. Follow these tips for a safe holiday:

- Plan food-free Halloween activities. Fun alternatives include costume contests, games and pumpkin carving.
- Don't let your food-allergic child trick-or-treat alone, and always make sure they carry their autoinjectable epinephrine with them.
- Verify that adults or friends with your child understand his or her food allergies and what to do in an emergency.
- Be cautious of "fun size" candy, which may contain different ingredients than regular size packages.
- Teach your child how to politely say no to food that may not be safe, especially homemade items such as cookies and cupcakes.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Food allergies account for 35% to 50% of all cases of anaphylaxis.
- In 2007, approximately 3 million children under the age of 18 were reported to have had a food or digestive allergy in the previous 12 months.
- The prevalence of food allergy among children under the age of 18 increased 18% percent from 1997 to 2007.

Ghosts and goblins aren't the only scary things your children might encounter this Halloween. For parents of kids with food allergies, Halloween treats—from candy to cookies—can be frightening too.

Common allergens such as peanuts, tree nuts, milk and egg are often ingredients in Halloween treats. Some kids may experience a rash or red, itchy skin, vomiting, a stuffy, itchy nose, or diarrhea or stomach cramps if they eat a food to which they are allergic. For children who are severely allergic, a single bite of these foods may cause a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis.

An anaphylactic reaction typically affects more than one part of the body, and can happen very quickly. Signs of anaphylaxis include:

- A lump in the throat, hoarseness or throat tightness
- Trouble breathing, wheezing or chest tightness
- A tingling feeling in the hands, feet, lips or scalp

Other symptoms of anaphylaxis include dizziness, confusion and shock. If you or your child experience any of these symptoms, use your autoinjectable epinephrine and call 911 immediately.

To the Point

Be cautious of "fun size" candy, which may contain different ingredients than regular size packages.



Your source for more information
or to find an allergist/immunologist.