

How to Prepare for Your Allergist Appointment

1. Find a certified allergist:

Visit the College of Physicians and Surgeons website for your province to find the names of allergists in your area and ask your family doctor for a referral. When searching the college's database, look under "specialists" and search for the title "Clinical Immunology and Allergy".

2. Keep a food journal and bring it to your appointment:

Record the date, the food eaten, symptoms and any treatment provided so the allergist can see if there is a pattern of reactions.

3. Bring a sample of the food you suspect caused a reaction:

Processed food is made up of many different ingredients so it is good to have the labelled food item with you. Call the allergist's office to confirm what other food items you may need to bring.

4. Let the allergist know if there is a family history of food allergy or other allergic conditions:

This includes a history of asthma, eczema, hay fever, seasonal and pet allergies.

5. Bring all medications that your child is currently taking to the appointment:

This includes all prescription medication such as asthma medications, cold or allergy medicine as well as herbal medicine.

6. Write down your questions for the allergist:

Depending on your location, you may have to wait several months or more for your appointment. Maximize your time with the allergist by preparing your questions ahead of time. It can be harder to get answers afterwards and it is easy to become distracted during the appointment.

7. Talk to your child ahead of the appointment to explain what to expect:

Let your child know that you will spend most of the appointment talking to the allergist. You can explain that this may involve talking about how to avoid certain foods in the future and carrying special medicine. Plan your child's meal requirements around the timing of your clinic visit; many allergy clinics do not allow food to be eaten on their premises.

8. Don't give your child antihistamines or cold medicine 4-7 days before having testing done:

Call your allergist's office to get their recommendations regarding this.



9. Take an engaging but quiet activity for your child to play with:

Appointment times may be long and you will have a more focused discussion if your child is occupied.

10. Bring your partner, or a family member, with you to the appointment if possible:

It is important that people in your support network hear information from the allergist about how to manage your child's allergies safely. Additionally, one person can stay with your child if you need to speak to the allergist alone about sensitive topics such as any fear or anxiety you may be feeling.

11. Know how and when to use the prescribed epinephrine auto-injector *before* you leave the allergist's office:

Ask the doctor for a training device or order one from the company website. You will need to feel confident about using the device so that you can teach others who care for your child. Understanding these steps will help to reduce anxiety.

12. Write down your child's list of allergens and any instructions regarding how to avoid them:

You may feel overwhelmed during the appointment so come prepared to make notes regarding special instructions. Ask for recommended websites or handouts that help explain how to manage allergens and how to provide emergency treatment. You will need credible information in order to teach others how to care for your child. A great resource is the "[*Living Confidently with Food Allergy*](#)" handbook that can be found at allergysupportcentre.ca

13. If your child has asthma, ask how often they need to be assessed:

An allergist, pediatrician, respirologist, community asthma clinic or a family doctor can do follow-up assessments.

14. Discuss frequency and timing of follow up appointments and testing:

Allergies can change over time so follow-up evaluations will need to be done periodically. Report any new episodes of allergic reactions, or newly developed food allergies, to your allergist.

15. Download a copy of the [Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan](#) and bring it to your appointment:

Review the emergency form with your allergist.

The Newly Diagnosed Support Centre is here to help:

allergysupportcentre.ca

Toll free: 1-877-322-9378 / 250-314-4814 (Western Canada)

Toll-free: 1-866-785-5660 / Toronto: 416-785-5666 (Head office)

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