

What Out for Nuts!

According to Duke University Medical Center, most children sensitive to peanuts experience their first allergic reaction between 14 and 24 months of age, often at the time of first exposure. These allergic reactions can be life threatening. If a child is exposed to nuts and has an allergic reaction while in your care, you may be held liable.

Many products that do not contain nuts are produced in factories where nuts are present. It only takes 1/1000th of a peanut to trigger an allergic reaction. Read labels carefully—they must state if the product was produced in an environment with nuts. This information may not be available on individual pieces of candy, but is printed on the main packaging.

Establish a nut-free environment policy. Communicate it to parents and reinforce it during holidays and birthday parties. Also communicate it to businesses that may invite your organization to their office at Halloween.

Ask parents of peanut-allergic children to provide you with a special care plan from the child's doctor and make arrangements for your center to have necessary medicines on hand. Train staff to use an Epi-Pen—it could save a child's life.