

over reactive?

Have no fear!

You don't have to put your child in a plastic bubble when you find out about his or her allergies. While it's normal for parents to want to protect their child from harm, overreacting to their allergies is not the answer. You cannot shield them from every little thing that may cause them harm.

With allergy season approaching, it is key to know the difference between an allergy and a cold. They can present with very similar symptoms, but these differences can help you tell one from the other:

- Allergies do not cause a fever or body aches, unlike a cold or flu
- Colds usually produce nasal discharge that is greenish and thick, whereas discharge from an allergy is clear and thin
- Colds usually last 7 to 10 days, while allergy symptoms last until an allergen is removed
- Allergic reactions most likely cause rashes

There are many different types of allergies; here are the most common ...

Food Allergies

Cow's milk
Peanuts
Soybeans
Eggs
Wheat

Environmental Allergies

Pollen (Hay Fever)
Animal Dander
Chemicals
Mold
Dust Mites

Contact Allergies

Detergents
Cosmetics
Perfumes
Cleaning Supplies
Nature



It is NOT advisable to diagnose allergies yourself. Confirm allergens through an allergy test, either from your pediatrician or an allergist!

Here's a TIP!

Remember... overreacting and creating a too-sterile environment can be dangerous! We count on some germ exposure to build up our immune systems.

We spend about 90 percent of our lives indoors, so it is important that your home be as allergen-free as possible for your child. Here are some at-home remedies to help avoid allergens:

- Make sure your air-conditioner is kept clean and that filters

are changed on a regular basis.

- Carpets or upholstered furniture collect dust, dirt, etc; consider replacing or cleaning them regularly.
- Dust and vacuum often.
- Put a damp cloth over your eyes.
- Check food labels.
- Honey has been found to be a natural remedy for allergies; give one teaspoon a day to children over 1 year old.
- Most importantly, have a good relationship with your pediatrician and allergist.

Here are some important questions to ask your doctor:

- How do you know my child has an allergy? How can you confirm the diagnosis?
- Does my child need allergy shots, further allergy testing, or other treatment? Does he or she need to carry an Epi-Pen?
- Which allergy symptoms are serious enough to warrant calling the doctor and scheduling a visit?
- At what point should my child see an allergist in addition to a pediatrician for allergy treatment?
- Is there anything else I should be doing to help control the allergies, such as dusting the house more often or taking other environmental measures?
- If my child is allergic to one thing, how likely is he or she to be allergic to something else?

Because school is a place where you cannot physically control what your child does, it is important to take more precautions. It is essential that you notify your child's teachers and coaches, and, most importantly, that you teach your child to be responsible for his or her own allergies. Just because your child is allergic to peanuts doesn't mean that the world revolves around his

or her allergies — remember, the child next to him may be allergic to everything *but* peanuts.

Here are some precautionary measures parents can take:

- Instill in your child at an early age the importance of avoiding detrimental allergens.
- Pack your child's lunch, so you know what he or she is eating.
- Make sure an Epi-Pen is accessible, if needed.
- Check pollen counts in your area.
- Inform your child's teachers, caregivers, schools, etc., of his or her allergies.
- Create an "allergy card" for the school nurse.

Children feed off their parents' behavior, but by not overreacting to your child's allergies, you can help make your child feel less different from his or her peers.

The problem with allergies is that once you have identified the source of an allergy, you may need to follow up with research because it may be necessary to avoid other things as well that are not noticeable to the naked eye. For example, if your child is allergic to milk, other ingredients to avoid are whey and casein. In this case, a parent may want to try a substitute for milk, such as coconut milk or rice milk. Make sure you confirm the allergy with a doctor before making any decisions, and ask him or her to recommend alternative products to use.

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Need help finding an allergist, pediatrician or other specialist? Call St. Luke's Physician Referral Service at 314-205-6060 for personal assistance finding one that meets your needs. Or search the online physician directory at stlukes-stl.com.



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