

Living A Normal Life with Food Allergies

By Amy Bentley



Dr. Mark H. Ellis
CHOC Allergy and
Immunology Specialist

Dr. Ellis completed his residency at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center in Tucson and a fellowship in Allergy Immunology at the University of California, Irvine, Medical Center. Dr. Ellis is chief of the CHOC Children's Specialists Allergy & Immunology Division and is the Director of the Allergy, Asthma & Immunology program at CHOC. Dr. Ellis specializes in the treatment and management of allergies and asthma. He is a principal investigator for many clinical research studies for adults and children concerning new treatments for asthma and allergies.

Dr. Ellis philosophy of care: "I like to identify the problem and educate the family on ways to prevent disease."

EDUCATION:
Tulane University School of Medicine
in New Orleans

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:
Pediatric Allergy and Immunology

15 million

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF
AMERICAN CHILDREN AND
ADULTS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Almost \$25 Billion

ANNUAL COST TO THE U.S.
ECONOMY RELATED TO
CHILDREN'S FOOD ALLERGIES



Experts in: **Pediatric Allergies** Learn more about managing your child's allergies at choc.org/health.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

A food allergy usually occurs in the first two years of life, says Dr. Ellis, a CHOC Allergy and Immunology Specialist. "It's important to know that allergic reactions to food typically occur immediately or within two hours of eating the food," Dr. Ellis explains. "The child might have skin issues like hives (itchy red spots) or develop itchy skin, or the child might throw up. All the organ systems can be involved. The child might wheeze or become short of breath. In severe cases, the cardiovascular system can be involved and the child could have a drop in blood pressure, feel light headed and faint."

MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES

There is no cure for food allergies and the best way to avoid getting sick is avoiding the food. "You have to find out what the child is allergic to. This comes from the family history and then we take a blood test or a skin test to confirm what the family has told the doctor," says Dr. Ellis. With a serious reaction, an



adult should inject the child with epinephrine (adrenaline) that reverses the symptoms) and call 9-1-1. "Always have an epinephrine auto-injector. Learn how to read food labels and be careful at high-risk eating areas such as buffets, ice cream parlors and Asian restaurants."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Any food can cause an allergy but a small number of foods are most commonly associated with food allergies. In fact, eight foods/food types account for 90 percent of all allergic reactions. They are: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (such as almonds and almonds), soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. Even trace amounts of a food allergen can cause a reaction, including a severe or life-threatening reaction. Peanuts, tree nuts and fish are the most common causes of severe reactions, says Dr. Ellis.



50 YEARS OF EXPERT CARE

For almost 50 years, CHOC Children's physicians, nurses and staff have been devoted to improving the lives of children and families in our community. As home to the region's only dedicated pediatric emergency department and other world-class services and programs, from cardiology and neurosurgery to neonatology and orthopedics, CHOC is committed to being the leading destination for children's health by providing exceptional and innovative care.

For information on the expert care we provide and the health plans we accept, visit choc.org

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PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN
UNDER THE AGE OF SIX WITH
FOOD ALLERGIES

