



# **The Family Food Allergy Book: A Life Plan You and Your Family Can Live with**

*Mireille Schwartz*

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Food allergies are an emerging epidemic and one of the fastest growing public health concerns in the United States, and there is no known cure. More than 12 million people in the United States have food allergies; 3 million sufferers are children. Unfortunately, the cause has not yet been medically identified, but the condition can run in families. That's the case with author Mireille Schwartz, who is allergic to fish, and whose parents, brother, and daughter all have allergies to different foods. Because Schwartz has struggled since childhood with this life-threatening challenge, she knows firsthand how to help families deal with the many difficult consequences including imminent death their loved ones face.

The eight primary food allergies are to milk, eggs, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish; some may also be allergic to medication. Even trace amounts of a food allergen can cause a reaction. Symptoms like breathing difficulties, trouble swallowing, fainting, or sharp increase in heart rate usually show up within minutes of exposure (although some may take several hours or even twenty-four hours). Therefore, early identification and strict avoidance of known food allergens are essential to prevent serious health consequences. Schwartz recommends observing children carefully for patterns and discussing them with your pediatrician. A colicky baby might be allergic to milk, or a diaper rash might show up every time after an infant eats eggs. Skin and blood tests are essential for a definitive diagnosis.

After Schwartz details the easier-to-spot and well-hidden sources of the eight main food allergy culprits and shares savvy allergen-avoidance techniques she devotes chapters to various challenges and how to cope with them in schools and restaurants, on public transportation and other enclosed spaces, and during family vacations and holidays. Another chapter is full of delicious recipes including chewy granola bars made without nuts or wheat, and homemade vanilla ice cream made without milk. Besides providing a wealth of helpful advice, Schwartz's overall message is supportive and positive: "It's absolutely possible to live a full, active life with your food allergies."

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