

Planning safe summer camp fun for kids with allergies and asthma

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Preparing a kid for summer camp is already a daunting task, and it's

even more complicated if your child has allergies or asthma, experts say.

"Kids with allergies and [asthma](#) need an extra layer of protection when they head off to [summer camp](#)," said allergist Dr. Gailen Marshall Jr., president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

"You want them to have as much fun as every other kid at camp, but in order to do that, certain systems need to be in place, and precautions must be taken to lock down a symptom-free experience," Marshall said in an ACAAI news release.

To that end, the ACAAI offers a handful of tips to help your camper have a fun-filled summer with few worries about their allergies or asthma:

Consider a specialty camp. Many camps focus solely on kids with [asthma](#) or food allergies. These camps provide specialized [medical staff](#) trained to treat allergic diseases. If you're concerned a regular camp might not be fully prepared to handle your child's condition, this might be the best option.

Pack smart. Visit your child's allergist and make sure prescriptions for allergy meds and asthma inhalers are up to date and match their current height and weight. Also send your kid off with a sufficient supply of epinephrine auto-injectors in case they have severe allergic reactions to food or insect stings.

Counsel the counselors. Make sure your kid's camp counselors know how to handle possible medical emergencies, including how to store and use epinephrine auto injectors and asthma inhalers. The counselors also should know when to call 911, the location of the nearest hospital and the quickest route there. Also brief the counselors on your child's

medication and how it's used.

Place their order. Make sure the camp counselors and kitchen staff are aware of your child's food allergies, and confirm there are no areas of the kitchen where cross-contamination can occur. Remind your child it's okay to let other people know about their allergy, and that it's never okay to eat other people's food.

The itchy and scratchy show. A rash from [poison ivy](#), poison oak and poison sumac is a form of skin [allergy](#), but take comfort that few people suffer a severe allergic reaction from these camp nuisances. Calamine lotion can help soothe such a rash, but your child probably will need a trip to the camp nurse or doctor if they brush up against one of these plants.

More information: The Allergy & Asthma Network have more about [summer camps for kids with asthma](#).

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