

# Backpacks. Crayons. Glue sticks. Epipen?

For more and more school-age children the Epipen is becoming a necessity for completing the back-to-school supply list. In fact, allergic conditions are one of the most common medical conditions affecting children in the U.S.

“Accidental exposure to allergens at school is a major concern for kids with severe allergies since any exposure could be fatal,” said Dr. Joyce Rabbat, pediatric allergist at Loyola University Health System.

Food allergies are the most concerning for school-age children since allergens can be hidden in food or utensils and pots and pans could be contaminated without the child’s knowledge. Dr. Rabbat said that parents of children with food allergies should ensure an Allergy Action Plan is in place for the child at his or her school.

This really could mean life or death to the child,” she said in suggesting that parents should make sure the school reviews the child’s health records that they provide from the doctor. She also suggests asking what the school does to prevent accidental exposure and that staff are trained to deal with an emergency situation.



If the child is older and knows how to self-administer medications, Dr. Rabbat suggests talking to the school about allowing the child to carry the medication with them. If that is not allowed at the school, make sure the following medications are available:

- Epinephrine autoinjectors
- Antihistamines
- Albuterol rescue inhalers

Also make sure a staff member, who is available at all times, is properly trained on to how to administer these medications and that your child is familiar with this person.