

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/frontlines-food-allergies/easing-the-burden-of-childhood-food-allergies-with-awareness-and-education/26317/>

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Easing the Burden of Childhood Food Allergies with Awareness and Education

Announcer Intro

You're listening to *On the Frontlines of Food Allergies* on ReachMD. On this episode, Dr. Ruchi Gupta will share tips for alleviating the burden of childhood food allergies. In addition to being a Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Dr. Gupta is also the Founding Director of Northwestern's Center for Food Allergy and Asthma Research. Let's hear from her now.

Dr. Gupta:

Prevalence of food allergy is higher than I think many people realize. It's 1 in 13, about 2 in every classroom, so if your kids are in school, you might see it there. And there has been some great policies now in schools to make them at least nut free and trying to figure out what the best policies are for schools. Staff are trained. Many of them have stock epinephrine.

I think the best things we can do as a society and as friends of others who have food allergy is I love the way things are moving, where people are more aware, and people ask, you know, with my kids at birthday parties, "Does anyone have a food allergy we should be aware of?" Even in restaurants now, a lot of the wait staff will say, "Do you have any allergies or intolerances?" And it's just really great because it makes the person with the food allergies feel seen, and it's not embarrassing. And I think helping in this way, you know, making sure you understand what a food allergy is, what types of reactions can happen, and even how to use epinephrine.

I think having friend support, especially for kids, is the most important thing for them because you don't want them to feel different. And there is a lot of bullying that goes on, and I think the bullying is because kids don't understand that food allergy is something that could really hurt the kid, right? We've seen people put peanut butter on stuff or wave nuts at kids, and I think it's because they don't really realize that this could truly hurt them; it's just a food. So when we make them aware, when we go into schools—and we have some educational material for free on our website for daycares, for elementary school, for middle school, for high school, and even for college—because once people are aware, I think they understand it and they really do support their friends. But especially for kids, but even into adults, everybody needs support, and everybody wants to be seen and heard. So by educating and with these awareness campaigns that are happening, I think it's getting better.

Announcer Close

That was Dr. Ruchi Gupta talking about how we can help support our youngest patients with food allergies. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *On the Frontlines of Food Allergies* on ReachMD dot com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!