

Tips to Safely Celebrate Easter with Food Allergies

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TAKE ALL FOOD ALLERGIES SERIOUSLY ■
TRACE AMOUNTS OF FOOD CAN CAUSE A REACTION

Easter at Home

Fuzzy bunnies and chicks, chocolate eggs, and green grass...if that sounds like a recipe for an allergy attack, KFA has many alternative ideas for you to celebrate Easter safely, whether at home or at school. Read on for some great ideas to keep your little hatchling happy in the week leading up to Sunday morning:

Easter is an important time of year for Christians. Amid all the excitement of a visit from the Easter bunny, it is also a great time to discuss and reinforce your family's religious beliefs.

Family Activities:

- Attend Easter service together. Discuss the message as a family.
- Read a story or watch a movie about Jesus.
- Host an Easter egg hunt for family and friends. Fill eggs with safe treats (see ideas, right).
- Decorate Easter eggs together. Make up fun awards for everyone (for example, silliest face painted on an egg, egg that looks most like a sunset, etc.).
- Host a family brunch (see KFA's extensive Safe Eats™ recipes).
- Allow children to choose potted plants and flowers at a local store. Then plant an indoor flower garden in another pot using the selected plants. Add moss, Easter decorations and a ribbon. Use as a centerpiece.
- Dyeing Easter eggs is a family tradition for many. However, if your child has an egg allergy, it may be appropriate to use one of the many wonderful alternatives to real eggs. As a bonus, these eggs can be saved as treasured family heirlooms.

Fun Ways to Decorate Eggs

- Dye or paint
- Decoupage with stickers, newspaper, tissue paper, or photos
- Color with markers or crayons
- Use stencils or stamps
- Wrap with twine or yarn
- Cover with glue and glitter
- Use Washi tape or stickers

Egg Alternatives

- ✓ EggNots (dyeable ceramic eggs)
- ✓ Plastic eggs
- ✓ Plaster eggs
- ✓ Papier maché eggs
- ✓ Wooden eggs

Non-food Treats to Fill Your Easter Eggs:

- ✓ Stickers
- ✓ Rings
- ✓ Coins or dollar bills
- ✓ Erasers
- ✓ Pencil sharpeners
- ✓ Finger puppets
- ✓ Bouncing balls
- ✓ Small plastic figurines
- ✓ Small toy cars
- ✓ Bracelets
- ✓ Marbles
- ✓ Hair elastics and clips
- ✓ Allergy-safe tattoos
- ✓ Small glow toys
- ✓ Bubbles
- ✓ Coupons

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Easter at School

Many schools are moving away from celebrating religious holidays. Here are both Easter and spring-themed crafts and ideas you can use at school. If your child's school chooses to celebrate the holiday, here are some tips.

Parents: Talk with the teacher in advance about making the celebration safe and inclusive for your child. Start this conversation early and with a written plan. Talk to your child. Remind him or her of your family rules about food. Helpful rules include having your child check with you before eating any food and not sharing foods.

Teachers: Please do not allow children with food allergies to share food. Foods from others may be a source of unintended allergen exposure. The CDC recommends the use of non-food rewards when possible. This promotes inclusiveness in the classroom. It also decreases the risk that a student could be exposed to an allergen.

Non-Religious Crafts for Public Schools:

- Use craft sticks, colored plastic spoons, or small brown paper bags to create chick or bunny puppets.
- Make maracas by putting beads into a plastic egg. Use fun, patterned tape to seal.
- Make little bunnies and chicks from pom-poms, felt pieces, and googly eyes.
- Create flowers using pipe cleaner and tissue paper.
- Have children create masks using paper plates, construction paper and a craft stick.
- Allow children to use pipe cleaners, felt, foam stickers, markers, and their imagination to make little critters from plastic eggs.

Religious Crafts for Private Schools:

- Have children make handprints in the form of a cross using paint on construction paper.
- Make a cross using craft sticks; drape with purple ribbon or fabric to signify Lent.
- Make a stained glass window by gluing pieces of tissue paper between two sheets of waxed paper. Allow to dry, and form into desired shape.
- Additional craft ideas can be found online. Many chain stores also carry inexpensive craft kits for children.

Caution: Avoid small items for very young children because of choking hazards. Holiday candies may be manufactured in a different facility than their regular-sized versions.

Fun Ways to Celebrate:

LANGUAGE ARTS: Host a spring-themed poetry reading.

Have children make puppets and then create and perform short skits using their puppets as characters.

Host an Easter Egg Scavenger hunt using plastic eggs. Fill eggs with clues about characters you have read in books during the school year. Have children work in teams to guess what characters are being described by the clues.

ART: Create spring-themed arts and crafts. Host a classroom or school-wide art show.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Do the Bunny Hop or the Chicken Dance.

Host an Easter or spring-themed obstacle course or fun run.

MATH: Have the class countdown to the first official day of spring or to Easter Sunday.

Have children track the weather such as rainfall, inches of snow, days of sunshine, and temperature. Create graphs and charts based on their data. Have children write and solve their own word problems based on the data.

SCIENCE: Grow plants/flowers. Have children track their growth. Allow children to take plants home as a gift for their family before Easter or spring break.

Do lessons related to spring (photosynthesis, parts of a plant, how a seed grows, life cycle of a chicken, habitats of bunnies). Host a classroom science fair to allow students to show what they have learned.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional ideas on school celebrations, see KFA's list of non-food rewards.

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