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Back to School Means an Increase in Food-Related Allergic Reactions Outside the Home

HOUSTON – August 14, 2006 – With school starting, parents and teachers must revisit solutions to a growing problem among students: preventing and handling food-related allergy emergencies. "It is crucial that school officials and medical personnel are aware of a student's food allergies and the location of lifesaving equipment and medications such as epinephrine and antihistamines. In these situations, medical ID jewelry can mean the difference between life and death," said Rick Russell, president and CEO of American Medical ID, a company that provides medical identification jewelry and has a special line of medical jewelry aimed at children and teenagers.

For children with life-threatening food allergies, it is critical to have an individual emergency plan documented and easily accessible to everyone at school, including temporary staff and substitute teachers. The best way to do that is to have this information on the child in the form of a medical ID. Nationally, school districts have different protocols that range from assuming that it's the student's responsibility to avoid contact with allergens, to mandating peanut-free tables in cafeterias and, in some cases, allowing children with food allergies to carry an EpiPen, a personal injector that contains medicine that can slow down a severe allergic reaction long enough for the child to receive appropriate treatment.

As children head back to school, it's time to make sure you know the current anaphylaxis protocol for your child's school and require your child to wear a medical ID.

Medical ID jewelry is available in a variety of styles — from inexpensive, non-personalized tags to fashionable, gold or sterling silver bracelets and necklaces. "Producing products that fit a child's unique medical needs and personal style is critical to the success of a medical ID program," said Russell "For a medical ID to be effective, it must be worn at all times. The best way to ensure that is to offer medical IDs that children will want to wear."

As your child heads back to school this year, make sure he or she wears a medical ID and continues to wear it — every day. Without one, precious time can be lost during a serious allergic reaction at school.

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