

Allergy Information

This information is taken directly from The School Food Allergy Program Binder which was prepared by the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, edited by Anee Munoz-Furlong, 1995, updated in August 2005. This binder provides a comprehensive and detailed amount of information and could be reviewed by anyone interested in the information. Specific pages are noted as the copy is quoted or paraphrased. This is information for the general public. Teachers have specific information in the faculty handbook. If you are interested in seeing the binder, please contact the school office.

Thank you to a small group of parents who prepared this document for the web site. It was prepared in order to inform the public on numerous topics relating to allergies.

TOPICS:

Effective School Readiness:

1. Effective school readiness includes the following (p. 5 -7)
 - Educate staff school – wide
 - Improve prevention and avoidance strategies
 - Epinephrine is readily available.
 - Staff is given an in-service each year on how to administer epinephrine to save a life
2. **Parents of a student** with food allergies should prepare their child on:
 - Who to talk to
 - Where the medications are kept
 - Where a safe supply of treats are located when unexpected events happen.
 - Role-play peer pressure
 - Role –play --- Describe their allergy and talk about who can back them up when someone does not understand or believe their food allergy can result in a severe reaction.
3. Encourage parents and children school wide to understand and support children with food allergies.

FOOD ALLERGY

1. Definitions:
 - “A **food allergy** involves an interaction between food and the immune system.” (P.2-1)
 - “A severe reaction is called **anaphylaxis or general shock** and can result in death if left untreated.” (p. 2 – 3)
2. Typical Allergy Symptoms (chart is found on page 2- 3)

Skin	Gut	Respiratory	Cardiovascular	Neurological
Hives	Cramps	Itchy, watery eyes	Reduced blood Pressure	Feeling of impending doom
Swelling	Nausea	Wheezing	Fainting	Weakness
Itchy, red rash	Vomiting	Runny nose	Shock	
Eczema Flare	Diarrhea	Stuffy nose	Chest pain	
		Sneezing		
		Coughing		
		Itching or swelling lips, tongue or throat		
		Change in voice		
		Difficulty swallowing		
		Tightness of chest		
		Shortness of breath		
		Repetitive throat clearing		

3. Reactions range from mild to severe. There is no way to determine how a reaction will develop (p. 2 - 3) Be prepared and have a plan.
 - Some reactions go away after medication has been given.
 - Some reactions grow from mild to severe in minutes.
 - Some reactions improve with medication but return within hours, called biphasic reactions, which may be more severe than the first reaction.
 - **“Quick treatment is the safest approach, even if it might have been unnecessary”**
(p. 2 – 6)
4. Once epinephrine has been administered (p. 2 – 10)
 - A rescue squad needs to arrive in 10 minutes before the effects wear off.
 - A student should be taken to a hospital for observation even if the symptoms have subsided. The student should be observed for at least 4 – 6 hours.

MILD ALLERGY --- Eczema

Eczema is a skin reaction, and it is not considered a severe allergic reaction. Refer to the Food Allergy Action Plan for a particular student to identify whether eczema is a trigger for mild or severe allergic reactions.

AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES: (Copy in this section is taken from pp. 1-6 and 1-7)
Avoid a specific allergen to prevent anaphylaxis.

1. Food Avoidance --- Common foods that cause allergic problems include:
 - Peanuts and tree nuts
 - Shellfish and fish
 - Milk
 - Eggs
 - Soy
 - Wheat
 - Sesame Seeds

A food source may be hidden or accidentally given; therefore complete avoidance is a difficult goal to achieve. Yet in a school setting, one can and must reduce the child's exposure to allergenic foods.

- Staff should be aware of technical and scientific words for common foods and carefully read all ingredients.
 - Instruct students that they may not trade or share food, food utensils, and or containers. Zero tolerance must be enforced by staff and parents.
 - Surfaces (tables and toys) should be washed to clean off contaminating food. Residual amounts can result in upset stomach and/ or skin rashes.
 - Food used in lesson plans must be monitored and substituted based on student/s allergies.
 - Students should wash their hands both before and after eating.
 - Parents must inform the school in writing about foods to avoid in a cafeteria menu / hot lunch and suggest safe substitutes.
 - Parents may choose to allow their child to consume only food brought from home.
2. Insect avoidance – in case of a bee sting.
 - Remove insect nests in and around the school.
 - Garbage should be stored in well covered containers.

FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLANS IN EFFECT AT CHRIST KING:

1. Faculty preparedness
 - The school will provide an in-service at the start of the year to inform all staff of the Food Allergy Plan.
 - Invite a nurse to the in-service to demonstrate the use of the EpiPen and teachers will practice the procedure.
 - Teachers who teach children with allergies will be given a folder containing information regarding that individual child.
 - Lunchroom supervisors will have that same information.
 - Individual classrooms have a designated place where the EpiPen is available as needed.
 - All teachers are trained in using the EpiPen and so is the office staff.

2. The Food Allergy Plan shall:
 - Identify children at risk, the allergens, and the steps to take if a questionable food has been ingested.
 - Includes an Emergency Treatment Plan for each child when a severe reaction occurs.
 - Provides instruction for how to read mild allergic symptoms.
 - In a child with severe allergies, all precautions should be taken with any physical change in the child's body no matter how mild a reaction appears. (p.2-5)
 - Be safe and not sorry....take all complaints from children with food allergy seriously. (p2-10)
 - Provided the students' medication and dosage information.
 - Use the following 3 R's to handle a situation (p.2-7)
 - Recognize the symptoms
 - React quickly
 - Review what caused the reaction and how well the emergency plan worked.

MEDICATIONS (Information is from pp 5-2 through 5-8)

- Need quick and easy access for emergency medications.
- Store liquid antihistamines at room temperature.
- Store epinephrine in a dark place at room temperature because light and extreme temperatures may inactivate the medication.
- Dosage identified on the student's Food Allergy Action Plan
- Check medications for expiration date on a regular basis (Beginning of each semester)

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

- The Action plan for a child with an allergy may be downloaded from the web under forms or one may request a copy from the office at the time the allergy is discovered.
- A new form must be completed at the start of each school year.

CLASSROOM PARTIES & UNEXPECTED EVENTS (copy taken from pp. 6-1 through 6-8)

- Avoidance is the key to success.
- Parents of a student with a food allergy should provide a list of ingredient terms to avoid.
- Parents of a student with a food allergy should be notified in advance of classroom parties and school events so they can provide a safe snack if possible.
 - Parents can provide a cache of special treats to leave in the classroom for their child when unexpected events occur.
- Read all ingredient labels for food and / or craft supplies.
- Avoid cross contact.

- Inform parent volunteers of food allergies as they arrive and designate one volunteer to be responsible for food given to the student / with allergies.
- Parent volunteers who are uninformed or do not believe that the student must avoid certain foods can create a high-risk situation. Make sure to address the situation with all volunteers who come into the classroom.

FIELD TRIPS (copy pp.6-3 and 6-4)

- Have someone on the field trip who knows how to administer the medication carry the prescribed medication and have the child in his or her small group.
- Determine ahead of time how to handle eating situations on the trip.
- Avoid high risk places.
- Invite the parents of the student(s) with food allergy to be volunteers on the trip.
- Discuss the field trip Emergency Action Plan with the student's parents.

TEACHER INFORMATION --- NEEDS PARENT SUPPORT

- Explain the Classroom Emergency Action Plan and walk through the steps to be taken if needed.
- Plan a signal between the student and the teacher to alert the teacher there is a problem.
- Talk about the key elements:
 - Do not share food or containers with a child who has allergies.
 - Do not trade foods with others.
 - Alert the teacher immediately if there is a problem.
 - Adults will listen to you if there is a problem.
- Talk about the dangers of children taking or giving food to others.
- Have a lesson about food allergies and invite the parents to come to talk about different allergies and what happens if a child takes food they are allergic to.
- Be careful when using food for craft projects.
- Inform substitute teachers of students with food allergies and how to handle the situation.
- Teach tolerance for differences to avoid harassment.
- Encourage classmates to be a PAL (Protect A Life) and "look out" for their friends.
- Encourage parents to partner with the school in teaching their children to understand mild and severe food allergies.
 - Children with allergies are just like all other children but their bodies fight against certain kinds of foods.
 - Their friends can get sick no near death if no one helps the child.
 - Children can be a hero by simply being a friend who doesn't share food and gets help from the teachers if their friend is feeling sick.

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND BEYOND: (Copy taken from pp.6-5and 6-6)

- Risk increases because food is more accessible and the student now has more freedom.
- The desire to be like everyone else with a belief he or she is invincible or *I can tough it out* increases risks.
- Students need to know they have their teacher and the staff's support if they are in trouble.
- Involve parents to identify special concerns.
- Teachers and staff can:
 - Communicate willingness to help the student but respect his/her privacy.
 - Help the student identify with a particular staff member that he or she feels close to and be able to help in an emergency.

Take all complaints as serious in nature.
Speak to all students to discourage harassment.

PARENTS PREPARE KIDS

Parents of children both with and without allergies can support one another by preparing their children. Some methods might be:

- How to identify signs of an allergic reaction
 - What is a mild reaction and what is a severe reaction?
- Who should the child talk to? --- any staff person
- Never share or trade food, silverware and or food containers.
- Read one of the books on food allergies
 - *The Peanut Free Café*
 - *Lenny Learns About Food Allergies*
 - *Susie's Sister has a Food Allergy.*
- Discuss the PAL posters in the school and the Hero award incentive.
- Reassure that the adults will listen to the child.

ROLE PLAY SUGGESTIONS (Some copies are taken from pp. 4-2 through 4-5)

Plan for the unexpected situations. Plan for what is out of the norm. The staff and parents should discuss the “what- if”

1. What if a reaction would occur in the lunchroom?
2. What if a reaction would happen in the classroom?
3. What if a reaction would happen when a substitute was in the classroom?

Have students with food allergies describe in their own words what it is like and how they feel.

Have students in classrooms describe in their own words what a food allergy is and what they should do if a reaction occurs.

SIMPLE STEPS IN USING AN EPIPEN (Copy taken from pp.2-8)

1. Pull off gray activation cap.
2. Hold black tip neat the outer thigh. Always apply to the outer area of the thigh.
3. Swing and jab firmly into the outer thigh until the auto-injector mechanism functions. Hold in place and count to 10. Then remove the EpiPen and discard. Massage the area for 10 seconds.

FOOD ALLERGY & ANAPHYLAXIS NETWORK

FAAN can be found at the following link ---- www.foodallergy.org

FAAN provides links on their website to related sites such as:

Food Allergy News for Kids
American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology

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