



# Managing Food Allergies in Schools

## The Role of School Nutrition Professionals



# Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
Division of Population Health



# Objectives

- Describe the symptoms of food allergies and life-threatening reactions.
- Identify three actions to prepare for and respond to food allergy emergencies.
- Identify three ways to create and maintain healthy, safe, and inclusive eating environments for students with food allergies.

# Overview

- The guidelines can help schools manage the risk of food allergies and severe allergic reactions in students.
- Managing food allergies requires a partnership between families, health care providers, and schools.

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## Did you know?



**About 20% of students with food allergies (1 of 5) will have a reaction while at school.**

- In a cafeteria of 100 students, at least 4 students are likely to be affected by food allergies.
- About 20% of students with food allergies (1 of 5) will have a reaction while at school.
- 25% of severe food allergy reactions (1 of 4) at school happen to students with no previous known food allergy.



# What can you do?

- **Get trained!**



- Participate in food allergy training.
- Ask the school nurse or administrator for information about school district food allergy policies and school Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan.
- Know which students in your school have food allergies and review their emergency care plans, Section 504 plans, or other accommodation plans.
- Help share appropriate actions to avoid allergic reactions and how to respond to food allergy emergencies with all food service staff.



## What can you do?

- **Learn about food allergies!**
  - A food allergy is an adverse immune system reaction that occurs soon after exposure to a certain food.
  - Any food can cause a food allergy, but most are caused by milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy, peanuts, and tree nuts.
  - A severe life-threatening allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis.





## What can you do?

- **Recognize food allergy symptoms!**
  - Food allergy symptoms can include
    - ◆ Swollen lips, tongue, or eyes.
    - ◆ Itchiness, rash, or hives.
    - ◆ Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
    - ◆ Congestion, hoarse voice, or trouble swallowing.
    - ◆ Wheezing or difficulty breathing.
    - ◆ Dizziness, fainting, or loss of consciousness.
    - ◆ Mood change or confusion.





# What can you do?

- **Know how to respond to food allergy emergencies!**



- If you suspect an allergic reaction, activate the student's emergency care plan immediately and call the school nurse or administrator.
- Never send a student with a suspected allergic reaction to the school nurse alone.
- The recommended first-line treatment for anaphylaxis is the prompt use of an injectable medication called epinephrine.



# What can you do?

- **If you suspect anaphylaxis**

1. Activate the student's food allergy emergency plan.
2. Be ready to administer an epinephrine auto-injector if you are delegated and trained to do so.
3. Call 911 or the emergency medical system immediately after administering the epinephrine. All students with anaphylaxis must be monitored closely and evaluated as soon as possible in an emergency care setting.





# What can you do?

- **Help prevent food allergy reactions in the cafeteria.**



- Recognize students with food allergies.
- Understand how to read food labels.
- Prevent cross-contact of possible food allergens.
- Wash hands during food preparation.

# Know the Eight Food Groups which Cause Most Serious Food Allergy Reactions

Most food allergies are caused by these eight food groups.  
Any food can cause an allergic reaction, however.



**MILK**



**EGGS**



**FISH**



**SHELLFISH**



**WHEAT**



**SOY**



**PEANUTS**



**TREE NUTS**

## Help prevent food allergy reactions in the cafeteria.

- **Develop and follow procedures for handling food allergens in the cafeteria.**



- ◆ Develop and follow procedures for cleaning food preparation areas and cafeteria tables and chairs.
- ◆ Support hand washing by students before and after eating.
- ◆ Discourage trading or sharing of food.



## What can you do?

- **Help ensure a healthy and safe school environment.**
  - Work ahead of time with teachers to plan safe field trip meals and snacks for students with food allergies.
  - Provide food allergy education to students and parents.
  - Make sure that food allergy policies and practices address all food served at school.
  - Report all cases of bullying to the school administrator.





# Resources

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs](#). 2013. Available at [www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/)
2. [Allergyhome.org resources for schools](http://www.allergyhome.org/schools/). Available at <http://www.allergyhome.org/schools/>
3. [Food Allergy Resource and Education \(FARE\). Managing Food Allergies in the Cafeteria](http://www.foodallergy.org/schools/cafeteria). Available at <http://www.foodallergy.org/schools/cafeteria>
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6. [School Nutrition Association. Food Allergy Resource Center](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=17241). Available at <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=17241>
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# Questions ?



# Thank You



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## References

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8. Food Code, 2009 Recommendations of the United States Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration, National Technical Information Service Publication PB2009112613. Accessed 6/25/14 at <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/FoodCode2009/UCM189448.pdf>