

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis

A Guide for Educational Professionals

Food Allergy Basics

- Affects 12 million Americans (1 in 25 or 4% of the population)
- 16-18% of school-age children who have food allergies have had a reaction at school
- It is estimated that 25% of the cases occur before the student has been diagnosed with food allergy

Food Allergy Basics

- Food allergy (immune response) vs. Food Intolerance (Lacking enzyme for digestion)
- No cure for food allergy – strict avoidance is the key

TOP 8 Foods Account for 90% of all Food Allergy Reactions

- **Milk**
 - **Soy**
 - **Peanut**
 - **Fish**
 - **Egg**
 - **Wheat**
 - **Tree Nut**
 - **Shellfish**
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- **But almost any food could cause a reaction**

Food allergy basics

- **Seafood allergy is most common**
 - 6.9 million, mostly adults
- **Peanut & tree nut next most common**
 - 1.8 million affected by each
- **Milk (900K) and egg (600k) more common among children/ some will outgrow**

Food Allergy Basics

- **Most reactions caused by ingestion**
- **Localized reactions caused by touch**
 - hives
- **Inhalation reactions are possible, but rare**
 - Cooking fumes
 - Peanut dust

Anaphylaxis

- **Severe, life-threatening allergic reaction**
- **Food allergy is leading cause of anaphylaxis**
- **Other causes – insect , medication, latex, exercise, unknown**

Anaphylaxis

- Symptoms can begin in minutes or up to 2 hours after exposure
- Risk factors:
 - Asthma
 - Peanut or tree nut allergy
 - Teenagers (risky behavior)

Food in Schools – Proceed With Caution

- Students may not know they have allergy
- Student may deny allergy
- Trace amounts of allergens can be found in unsuspecting foods – read labels carefully
- Avoid food on the TOP 8 list

Possible Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction

Skin	Gut	Respiratory	Cardiovascular	Neurologic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hives •Swelling •Itchy red rash •Eczema 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cramps •Nausea •Vomiting •Diarrhea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Itchy, watery eyes •Runny nose •Stuffy nose •Sneezing •Coughing •Itching/swelling of lips, tongue, throat •Change in voice •Difficulty swallowing •Chest tightness •Wheezing •Repetitive throat clearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Drop in blood pressure •Fainting •Shock •Chest pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Feeling of impending doom •Weakness

How children describe a reaction

- My tongue is hot or burning
- Something is poking my tongue
- I feel hair on my tongue
- Something is stuck in my throat
- My tongue is heavy or full
- I feel bugs in my ear
- My throat feels thick

Treatment – Individualized Health Plan

- **Benadryl for simple allergy**
- **Epinephrine for anaphylaxis**
 - Administer promptly
 - Always call 911
 - Contact nurse

Treatment

- **Texas law allows student to carry epinephrine injector with physician, parent, school nurse and administrative permission**
 - **School nurse will notify you if a student in your class is carrying this life saving medication**
- **Consider learning how to administer epinephrine so you can assist in an emergency**

QUESTIONS???

