

Food Allergy Policy



What You Need to Know

What is a food allergy?

A food allergy is an adverse immune system reaction that occurs soon after exposure to a certain food. The immune response can be severe and life threatening.

What are the most common foods that cause allergic reactions?

1. MILK
2. EGGS
3. PEANUTS
4. TREE NUTS (*Walnuts, Almonds, Cashews, Pistachios, and Pecans*)
5. FISH
6. SOY
7. WHEAT
8. CRUSTACEAN SHELLFISH
9. *SESAME*

What are symptoms of an allergic reaction to food?

Even a tiny amount of the allergy-causing food can trigger signs and symptoms. In some people, a food allergy can cause severe symptoms or even a life-threatening reaction known as *Anaphylaxis*. Symptoms can occur within a few minutes or hours of being eaten, inhaled or coming in contact with the allergen.

Mild symptoms include:

Nose: itchy or runny nose, sneezing

Mouth: itchy mouth

Skin: a few hives, mild itch

Gut: mild nausea or discomfort

Severe symptoms include:

Lung: shortness of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough

Heart: pale, blue, faint, weak pulse, dizzy

Throat: tight, hoarse, trouble breathing/swallowing

Mouth: significant swelling of the tongue or lips

Skin: many hives over body, widespread redness

Gut: repetitive vomiting or severe diarrhea

Psychological: feeling something bad is about to happen, anxiety, confusion

Food Allergy Policy

Children with food allergies might communicate their symptoms in the following ways:

- *“It feels like something is poking my tongue.”*
- *“My tongue (or mouth) is tingling (or burning).”*
- *“My tongue (or mouth) itches.”*
- *“My tongue feels like there is hair on it.”*
- *“My mouth feels funny.”*
- *“There’s a frog in my throat; there’s something stuck in my throat.”*
- *“My tongue feels full (or heavy).”*
- *“My lips feel tight.”*
- *“It feels like there are bugs in there (to describe itchy ears).”*
- *“It (my throat) feels thick.”*
- *“It feels like a bump is on the back of my tongue (throat).”*

Source: The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network. Food Allergy News. 2003;13(2).

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death. Anaphylaxis can cause the body to go into shock causing a sudden drop in blood pressure, and the airway to narrow, blocking breathing. *Signs and symptoms include a rapid, weak pulse; a skin rash; and nausea and vomiting.*

Who is being affected?

Food allergies affect an estimated 4%–6% of U.S. children, most of whom attend federal-and state supported schools or early care and education programs every weekday.

How are food allergies diagnosed?

A qualified medical professional, such as an allergist or physician, can diagnose food allergies by using a variety of tests.

How can an allergic reaction be avoided?

Avoid the food that causes the allergy. Having a plan to limit the ways in which the child could have contact with the allergen, including airborne.

How are allergic reactions treated?

Always call 911! Reactions should be treated according to the students' Food Allergy Action Plan/Emergency Care Plan.

Food Allergy Policy

Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan (FAMPP)

1. Management of Food Allergies For Students

- a. The USDA requires a doctor's statement that a student has a food allergy disability before food service staff in the Child Nutrition Program can make meal accommodations and provide a safe meal for students with a food allergy.
- b. If Food Services does not receive a medical statement from a recognized medical authority, the student will keep receiving a regular lunch tray.
- c. Parents should have a physician fill out a medical statement to request special meals and/or accommodations for their child. This will also ensure that the Food Service Office is aware which student has food allergies.
- d. Medical statements completed by parents or guardians will not be accepted.

2. Prepare for food allergies

- a. The parent of the student will work with the Food Service administration if necessary to determine if food allergens are on the menu.
- b. The Food Service Office will accommodate the student to any food substitution if possible.

3. Provide professional development on food allergies for staff members.

- a. Kitchen staff received training to increase their knowledge about food allergies and how to identify and respond to food allergy emergencies.
 - i. Identify top 9 food allergens
 - ii. Clean, sanitize, label, and storage to avoid Cross Contact
 - iii. Recognize and respond to food allergy reactions

4. Create and maintain a healthy and safe environment

- a. Kitchen staff will create an environment that is as safe as possible from exposure to food allergens by following procedures for handling food.