



5 Things Teachers Should Know About Managing Students with Life-Threatening Food Allergies

1) Always take food allergies seriously.

- ❖ Food allergy is a potentially life-threatening condition for which there is no cure.
- ❖ Strict avoidance of the offending allergen is the only way to prevent a reaction.
- ❖ Food allergy can cause anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction that can be fatal if not treated quickly.
- ❖ Every bite matters!

2) As a teacher, you can help reduce the risk of an allergic reaction.

- ❖ Use non-food items, or limit the use of allergen-containing foods, in classroom activities, lesson plans, parties and celebrations.
- ❖ Prohibit students from sharing or trading food.
- ❖ Incorporate special seating arrangements such as an allergen-safe table or zone.
- ❖ Require students to wash their hands or use wet wipes when they enter the classroom in the morning and again after eating lunch. Hand sanitizer does NOT remove allergens.
- ❖ Wipe down surfaces (tabletops, chairs, etc.) with cleaning agents that remove allergens after allergen-containing foods have been used or consumed.

3) Talk with your school nurse about responding to a potential anaphylactic emergency.

- ❖ All school personnel who come into contact with a food-allergic student throughout the day (substitute teachers, cafeteria staff, bus drivers) should have a copy of the student's Food Allergy Action Plan (FAAP) in their area, and should be trained and educated on how to recognize the signs of a potential reaction, and to administer epinephrine.
- ❖ Discuss with the nurse how a child might describe an allergic reaction.
- ❖ Discuss with the nurse the location of the student's prescribed epinephrine auto-injector(s) during the school day, and who is authorized to administer the epinephrine, which can be any school personnel.
- ❖ Most states, including Texas, have laws that allow a student, with appropriate consent, to carry his or her prescribed epinephrine at school.

4) Meet with the child's parent(s).

- ❖ Assure them that you understand the severity of food allergy, you have been trained and educated on how to recognize a potential allergic reaction and how to administer epinephrine, and that you will keep a copy of the child's FAAP in your area.
- ❖ Assure them that you will report any bullying/teasing due to food allergy to appropriate school personnel.

5) Foster an environment of inclusion and equality among your students.

- ❖ Incorporate food allergy, along with other chronic health conditions such as asthma and diabetes, into your classroom curriculum.
- ❖ Help assure that students with food allergy never feel isolated or excluded from classroom activities.

For additional resources, visit www.foodallergy.org