



Food Allergies & School



10 Tips for School Teams & Parents



- ❖ **Do not overestimate the understanding that people have about the seriousness of anaphylaxis.** Do not underestimate the necessity to make school accommodations, provide staff education and increase community awareness.
- ❖ **Develop multiple check systems to determine ingredient safety of food and non-food items used at school.** Ingredients used in food served in the cafeteria, field trips, bake sales and class projects can all change and/or have new people involved who do not fully know the situation. Welcome and encourage parents/guardians and older students to also check ingredients.
- ❖ **Inform everyone who might come in contact with a student with food allergies about the risk for anaphylaxis and need for prevention measures.** All school personnel directly involved with students at risk for anaphylaxis who have prescribed epinephrine should be educated in anaphylaxis prevention, identification and management by a school nurse or other registered nurse. This includes training and evaluation on the use of the prescribed epinephrine auto-injector.
- ❖ **Health and safety needs take precedence.**
- ❖ **Change can be slow but strive to be proactive.**
- ❖ **Education is a building process. Set the ground work early.** Get student advocates like the school nurse, principal and/or special education director on teams early on – well before the school year begins.
- ❖ **Make sure staff education and training is in place before a student with food allergy starts any program, even if it means a delay in starting the program.**
- ❖ **Negative comments and conflict are often based in fear and concern.** People may be afraid they will do something wrong or miss something. Others may worry a child is not in a safe situation. Education, awareness, preparation, practice and plans are key to minimizing any resistance.
- ❖ **Many problems are due to miscommunication and misunderstanding.** Strive for clarity in guidance and direction when implementing accommodation plans.
- ❖ **Be a TEAM PLAYER! Many school events will need adaptation for safe accommodation of a student with food allergies. Aim for safe inclusion.** Encourage suggestions from parents/guardians for safely modifying school activities. Welcome parents/guardians as field trip chaperones, classroom ‘mothers in charge’ and involvement in after school events. Parents and school team members each have important responsibilities in assuring student health and safety.

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Reference:

Russell AF, Huber MM. Food Allergy Management in Elementary School: Collaborating to Maximize Student Safety. *Journal of Asthma & Allergy Educators*. 2013; 4: 290-304.