Food Allergy Management: Tools for Schools

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Affiliation or Financial Disclosure

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Objectives

• Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s resources for food allergy management in schools.

• Identify best practices to coordinate across school staff to prevent allergic reactions in schools.

• Describe how to use federal food allergy guidelines and resources to change school policy and practices.
What is a food allergy?

• A food allergy is an adverse immune system reaction that occurs soon after exposure to a certain food.

• Food allergy symptoms can include multiple organ systems including, respiratory, gastrointestinal tract, skin, cardiovascular, and neurological.

• A severe life-threatening allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis.
What are Common Allergens?

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
Did you know?

- 4% of students are affected by food allergies, and the incidence is increasing\(^1,2\)

- 1 in 5 students with food allergies will have a reaction while at school\(^3,4\)

- 25% of severe food allergy reactions at school happen to students with no previous known food allergy\(^3,4\)

Food allergy reactions can be unpredictable. About 1 out of 4 students who have a severe and potentially life-threatening reaction at school have no previous known food allergy.\(^4,5\)
Voluntary Guidelines

Section 1 - Food Allergy Management in Schools & Early Care and Education (ECE) Programs

Section 2 - Actions for School Boards and District Staff

Section 3 - Actions for School Administrators and Staff

Section 4 - Actions for ECE Administrators and Staff

Section 5 - Federal Laws and Regulations

Section 6 - Food Allergy Resources
Schools can help prevent allergic reactions

1. Ensure the daily management of food allergies in individual children.

2. Prepare for food allergy emergencies.

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

4. Educate children and family members about food allergies.

5. Create and maintain a healthy and safe educational environments.
Actions for School Nutrition Directors

- Help plan and promote the district’s food allergy management prevention plan.
- Coordinate food substitutions for all schools with students who have food allergies, in consultation as necessary with each child’s doctor.
- Provide trainings to school food service staff on food allergies.
- Share information about options for food substitutions with the parents of students with food allergies.
- Help enforce policies that promote healthy physical environments.
Actions for School Nutrition Managers & Staff

- Consult with the district foodservice director to develop individual dietary and cafeteria management plans for each student with a food allergy.

- Follow policies and procedures to prevent allergic reactions and cross-contact of potential food allergens during food preparation and service.

- Be prepared to share information about ingredients in recipes and foods served by the school food service program with parents.

- If delegated and trained according to state laws, be ready to use an epinephrine auto-injector.

- Complete training to help you recognize and understand the signs and symptoms of food allergies, identifying allergens, and how to plan meals for students with food allergies.
Actions for School Administrators

- Lead school’s planning for managing food allergies.
- Oversee the daily management of food allergies for students.
- Ensure that each school has an emergency plan that includes responding to food allergy emergencies.
- Set up easy-to-use communication system for staff to respond to food allergy reactions and emergencies.
- Support professional development on food allergies for staff.
- Educate students and family members about food allergies.
- Create and maintain a healthy and safe school environment.
Actions for School Nurses

- Help with planning for managing food allergies.
- Supervise the daily management of food allergies for individual students.
- Develop instructions for responding if a school nurse is not available.
- Train delegated staff members to administer epinephrine auto-injector.
- Train school staff to recognize signs and symptoms of food allergy reactions and anaphylaxis.
- Educate students and family members about food allergies.
- Assess the school environment to identify allergens that could lead to allergic reactions.
- Work with appropriate staff to develop strategies to help children avoid identified allergens.
CDC Food Allergy Toolkit for Schools

Materials for
- Administrators
- Superintendents
- Nutrition Professionals
- Teachers and Para-educators
- Mental Health Professionals
- Transportation Staff
- School Nurses

www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/index.htm
Power-Point Presentations

Managing Food Allergies in Schools
What Schools Need to Know

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

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
Podcasts

Managing Food Allergies at School: School Nutrition Professionals
References


Where can you find more information?

Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/

Allergyhome.org resources for schools
http://www.allergyhome.org/schools/

Food Allergy Resource and Education (FARE)
http://www.foodallergy.org/resources/schools

Michigan State University Extension, Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward.

National Association of School Nurse (NASN), Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Tool Kit.
http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/FoodAllergyandAnaphylaxis

NEA Health Information Network. Food Allergy Book: What School Employees Need to Know.
http://www.neahin.org/educator-resources/foodallergybook.html
Food Allergy Management in Parkway School District

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Overview of District

The mission of the Parkway School District is to ensure all students are capable, curious, caring and confident learners who understand and respond to the challenges of an ever-changing world.
Overview of Parkway Schools

17,600 students
- 18 elementary schools
- 5 middle schools
- 5 high schools (1 non-traditional high school)
- 2 early childhood centers
- District FLR 20%

https://www.parkwayschools.net
We are in West St. Louis County, Missouri.

- Total population: 142,809
- Number of households: 56,966
- Racial makeup of residents: 81.2% White; 9.1% Asian; 6.1% African-American; 2.7% Multi-racial; .9% Other
- Average household income: $116,260
- 26.8% graduate or professional degree
Food Allergy and Asthma Incidence in Parkway

![Graph showing food allergies and asthma incidence from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019. The graph indicates an increasing trend in food allergies and a slight fluctuation in asthma incidence.]
Anaphylaxis Episodes in Parkway 2014-2018

The chart shows the number of anaphylaxis episodes in Parkway from 2014 to 2018. The trend indicates an increase in episodes over the years, with a significant rise from 2015 to 2016.
Anaphylaxis Caused by Sharing of Food
Anaphylaxis by School Level

![Anaphylaxis by School Level](chart_image)
Food Allergy Policy Update –
Student Allergy Prevention and Response

• From (2011):

“Guidelines will be in place to protect food-allergic children from potential exposure to allergens during the school day”

• To (2017):

Classrooms should be food-free whenever possible.
Food may not be brought from home for sharing class-wide.
Avoid use of food in the curriculum.
Find safe and inclusive ways to celebrate without food.
Birthday celebrations at school and holiday celebrations at school will not include food.
Avoid using food as a reward or motivator.
Field trips should follow protocols for food safety.
School-sponsored clubs, athletics and after school activities will use food carefully.

*Additional specific responsibilities related to family, school and student.

https://go.boarddocs.com/mo/pkysd/Board.nsf/Public#
Process Used To Address Concerns

• Drafted proposed “Food Safety Protocol”
• Vetted through district leadership
• Shared with Principals and other stakeholders
• Adopted July 2017
Food and Nutrition Services Trainings

• Used CDC Food Allergy Toolkit Presentation
• Adapted
• Annual training with all food and nutrition services staff
Other Helpful Resources

• CDC Healthy Schools
  • Tips for Teachers – Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in the Classroom

• Action for Healthy Kids
  • Healthy Non-Food Rewards

• National Association of School Nurses
  • Development of School District Policies and Protocols Checklist
  • Foster Stakeholder Collaboration Checklist
  • Training School Personnel Checklist

• FARE
  • Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan

• American Academy of Pediatrics
  • Health services Assessment Tool for Schools (“HATS”)

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Policy Changes and Updates

- Classrooms should be food-free whenever possible.
- Food may not be brought from home for sharing class-wide.
- Avoid the use of food in the curriculum whenever possible.
- Find safe and inclusive ways to celebrate without food.
- Avoid using food as a reward or motivator.
- Field trips will follow the same protocols for food safety.
- School-sponsored clubs, athletics and after school activities will use food carefully.
Lessons learned

• What worked well
  • Policy and practice changes decrease allergic reactions
  • School nurse support critical
  • Administrative support important
  • Communication between school nurses and other school staff critical
  • Schools learned to creatively celebrate without food

• Challenges
  • Culture change takes time
  • Social media and community concerns that were out of district control
  • Some compromise had to occur
Birthday Bear
Future Planning

• Focusing on risk in high schools
  • Student education
• Cafeteria education
  • Posters
  • Point of sale
• Working with families to get allergy action plans for school
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