

BE AWARE. BE SAFE.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Experts say that peanuts can kill an allergic person within three minutes after exposure either by ingestion or inhalation
- Peanut residue lingers for hours on clothes and fingers and stay airborne in an enclosed space for days
- Because of *cross-contamination* in bakeries, most nut allergic kids must avoid non-prepackaged baked goods, even if they don't contain nuts themselves.
- Be aware—ask a parent or caregiver before offering any food to a young child
- If you see a Check My Tag shirt or any other alert device on a child, be extra vigilant

This public safety information provided by



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How to Keep Our Food-Allergic Friends Safe at School

The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) now says that up to 8% of children are affected by food allergies. This equates to roughly one in every fifteen children (about 1 in every classroom in America). Parents of children who have life-threatening reactions (also called anaphylaxis) are especially concerned about their children in the school environment, where exposure to potentially fatal substances can occur in any number of situations during the typical school day.

The top eight trigger foods for anaphylaxis are peanuts, tree nuts, milk, soy, fish, shellfish, eggs, and wheat. Food products are also often used during math, science and art. Ann Munoz-Furlong, the CEO of FAAN says, "Often, parents and school staff think about avoiding allergens such as peanuts, milk products, or other foods in the lunchroom. Recent studies have shown the majority of allergy reactions take place *in the classroom.*"

More likely than not, you know and spend time with *at least* one child that is at risk for a life-threatening reaction. What steps can you take to make school a safer place for many children?

Learn How To Recognize A Reaction. These symptoms may appear immediately or up to 2 hours after exposure:

- Systemic (not localized) itchy skin and/or hives
- Swelling or flushing of lips, throat, tongue, face or extremities
- Wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, hoarseness
- Headache, pallid complexion, blue lips
- Nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea
- Loss of consciousness

Children may describe a reaction by saying, "My mouth (or tongue) feels..." "itchy, hot, burning, or hairy" Or, "It feels like there's something stuck in my throat." Very young children will put their hands in their mouths and pull and scratch at their mouths and tongue.

Learn What to Do in Case A Reaction Occurs. In the case of severe reactions, the *Emergency Action Plan (EAP)** is simple: 1) Administer a shot of epinephrine, and 2) Call 911!

Take Steps to Minimize the Risk of Accidental Exposure

- Provide an allergen-free area for snack and mealtimes
- Implement a "no sharing food" rule
- Ask parents of food allergy kids to provide a list of *safe snacks* or better yet, ask them to provide a supply of snacks that can be offered to their child, if necessary
- Make sure all the kids wash their hands AFTER eating, to prevent the spread of food residue on classroom and playground surfaces
- Notify parents of food-allergic kids of events that could bring special food into the classroom.
- Ask the parents of children at risk to review arts and crafts materials that you intend to use in the classroom
- Avoid edible treats as incentives
- Send this bulletin with a note to parents in the classroom to alert them to this concern and ask for their cooperation in maintaining a safe learning environment for everyone

**For more on Emergency Action Plans and additional resources on managing kid's food allergies, visit www.checkmytag.com/downloads.html*