

Food Allergies

Food Allergy Basics

- The role of the immune system is to protect the body from germs and disease
- A food allergy is an abnormal response by the immune system to a food protein
- When the food is eaten, the immune system thinks the food is harmful and releases histamine and other chemicals to “attack” the enemy



Food Allergy Basics

- There is no cure for food allergys
- Complete and strict avoidance is the only way to prevent a reaction



Food Allergy Basics

Eight foods cause 90% of the allergic reactions in the United States:

- Milk
- Peanuts
- Eggs
- Tree Nuts (e.g. walnuts, pecans)
- Wheat
- Fish
- Soy
- Shellfish



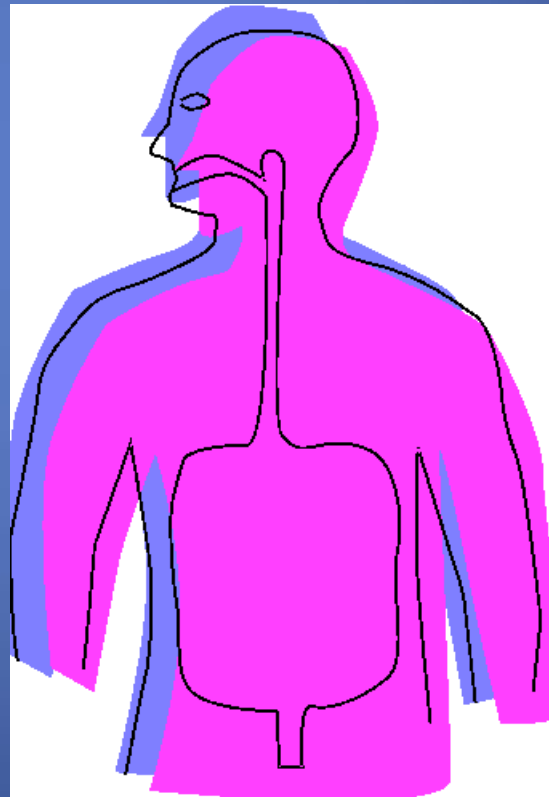
Food Allergy Facts

- 4% of US population or 12 million Americans (1 in 25) have a food allergy
- Children are the largest group affected
 - 4 to 6% of children have a food allergy
 - 40% of these children have already experienced a severe or life-threatening reaction



Symptoms – one or more may occur shortly after eating

- Trouble swallowing
- Shortness of breath
- Repetitive coughing
- Voice change
- Nausea & vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal cramping
- Swelling
- Hives
- Eczema
- Itchy red rash
- Drop in blood pressure
- Loss of consciousness



Anaphylaxis

- A serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death
- Causes of anaphylaxis include foods, insect stings, latex, and medications
- Each year in the U.S., anaphylaxis to food causes over 50,000 emergency room visits and 150 deaths
- Individuals with food allergy plus asthma are at greatest risk for a life-threatening reaction



Epinephrine (adrenaline)

- Prompt administration is key to surviving anaphylaxis. Fatalities resulted from a delay/failure to give epinephrine.
- Prescribed as EpiPen® or Twinject® autoinjectors.



How To Use An Epi-Pen

- Put on gloves
- Remove protective carrier case
- Grasp unit with orange tip pointing downward
- With the other hand, pull the blue safety release
- Hold/grip injector around the middle
- Hold orange tip near outer thigh (Do not put hand/thumb over the orange tip)



How To Use An Epi-Pen

- Swing and firmly push orange tip against outer thigh until it clicks
 - Should be perpendicular (90 degree angle) against thigh
 - It is designed to inject through clothing including jeans
- Hold firmly against thigh for approximately 10 seconds



How To Use An Epi-Pen

- Remove unit from thigh and massage the injection site for 10 seconds
- Dispose of Epi-pen in sharps container (if available)
- Always call 911 and seek medical attention following administration, even if the student seems better
- Call parents



Please view before continuing presentation:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EN83hen4D-Y



Common Side Effects Of Epinephrine

- Anxiety or nervousness
- Dizzy, drowsy
- Dry mouth
- Headache
- Increased sweating
- Nausea
- Tired, weak



More severe Side Effects Of Epinephrine

(These should be reported to physician
immediately)

- Allergic reactions like skin rash, itching or hives, swelling of the face, lips, or tongue
- Breathing problems
- Chest pain
- Flushing
- Irregular or pounding heartbeat
- Numbness in fingers or toes
- Vomiting



Managing Food Allergies Day-to-Day



Basic Principles

- Totally avoid food allergens
 - Wise food choices through vigilant label reading, asking questions
 - Careful food preparation and cleanup
- Be prepared in case of a reaction



Vigilant Label Reading

- Read every label every time
 - Formulations can change without warning
- Don't rely on "safe lists"
- Allergens can be in non-food items
 - Soaps, shampoos, skin products, medications, pet foods



Careful Food Preparation

- Wash hands, cooking utensils, and food preparation surfaces to avoid reactions from trace amounts of proteins left behind.
 - Liquid soap, bar soap, or commercial wipes for hands not antibacterial gel sanitizers
 - Dishwashing detergent and hot water for cooking utensils and cutting boards
 - Common household cleaners for counters, tables, and other surfaces



Be Prepared for an Allergic Reaction

- Accidents are never planned
- Keys to being prepared:
 - Medications must be immediately available **at all times**
 - Knowing how to recognize symptoms and administer medications quickly
 - A written Food Allergy Action Plan



If a Reaction Occurs

Activate the Food Allergy Action Plan Immediately!

Recognize the symptoms

React quickly

Review what caused the reaction and how well the action plan worked



Managing Food Allergies In Schools



Food Allergy In Schools

- Affects about 2 million school-age children
- Up to 25% of peanut/tree nut reactions in schools are first-time reactions
- Most reactions in schools occur from food in the classroom used for projects or celebrations



Food Allergy In Schools

- Once a reaction begins, there is no way to know how severe it will become
- Take all food allergy-induced allergic reactions seriously
- Every school should have a plan for managing food allergies



The Food Allergy Plan

The plan to manage a student's food allergies should take into account:

- unique needs of the child
- school environment (size, staff, etc.)
- goal of equal participation in all school-related activities



The Food Allergy Plan

Developing the plan is a team effort involving:

- school staff
- child's family (parents/guardians)
- child's physician
- the child who has allergies, as age appropriate



School's Responsibility

- Create an environment where children, including those with food allergies, will be safe
- Employ prevention and avoidance strategies
- Be prepared to handle an allergic reaction
- Address teasing



Family's Responsibility

- Provide written medical documentation
- Work with the school to develop a plan
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace after use or when expired
- Keep emergency contact information up-to-date
- Teach the child age-appropriate self-management skills



Strategies to Minimize Risk of Reactions

- Clean hands before and after eating or handling food
- Plan for safe parties/celebrations
- Avoid using foods in classroom art/craft projects or as incentives
- Prohibit food trading and sharing



Key Points for Schools

- Reactions can occur **anywhere** in school
- Early recognition and treatment of anaphylaxis is imperative and life saving
- Education of all staff is important



Free Downloads from FAAN

www.foodallergy.org

- Food Allergy Action Plan
- School Guidelines for Managing Students With Food Allergies
- Information Sheets
 - How to Read a Label, Facts and Statistics
- Be A PAL: Protect A Life From Food Allergies
- Posters

