

CREATING SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES

School staff and parents are responsible for creating safe and healthy environments for students. This is an additional challenge for schools attended by children with allergies, especially life-threatening allergies. While we take every step to create a risk-free environment, school staff and parents can take important steps to minimize potentially fatal allergic reactions as there are implications for the whole school, not just individual classrooms.

Several of our students have severe allergic reactions if they come in contact with certain allergens. Allergens are any substance or condition that can bring on an allergic reaction or a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis. Peanuts, legumes (chickpeas, pinto beans, soybeans, kidney beans), nuts and their products, including peanut butter, are the leading causes of anaphylaxis, although there are other allergens which can cause reactions. Even a trace amount or airborne particles can trigger a reaction.

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction, that if not treated can very quickly lead to death. It occurs when a susceptible individual is exposed (touches or eats) to foods, is stung by an insect, or is given medication, to which he/she is allergic (allergens). Anaphylaxis affects multiple systems in the body. The most dangerous reactions result in breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock which are potentially fatal.

Symptoms include: tingling in mouth; swelling in lips, tongue, throat; throat tightness; difficulty swallowing; difficulty breathing, wheezing, coughing; change in voice, choking; chest tightness; sense of fear, panic; flushing of the face and body; hives; itching; weakness or dizziness; nausea or vomiting; stomach cramping or diarrhea; feeling faint; and/or cold clammy skin. Not all symptoms have to be present nor do they occur in the same order. No two reactions are the same.

It is especially important that parents communicate a life-threatening allergy to the school as soon as they are aware of it. Please notify the principal and your child's teacher so that we take the steps to create accurate records and inform staff of the established protocol.

As a community that places the safety of all students as a top priority, we ask that students and parents assist by refraining from sending peanuts, nuts and their products to school.