

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Life Threatening Food Allergies

This Handout is designed to accompany the presentation "Life Threatening Food Allergies"  
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Each of us, as staff in a school, will have direct contact with students who have life threatening allergies to different foods. The most common food allergies in our schools are to peanuts and tree nuts. Other food allergies include fish, shell fish, milk, eggs, wheat, soy and others. 80 % of children with allergies to peanuts and tree nuts will not outgrow this allergy.

Imagine that 6% to 8% of our students could have a life threatening reaction called anaphylaxis if they ingest or breathe in the protein from specific foods. Even though all health issues are confidential, the names and often times the pictures of children who have these allergies will be provided to you because you have a "need to know" in helping these students stay safe. These students are encouraged to wear medical alert jewelry also.

- ✓ Do you know particular students in your classroom, on the playground, other places in the school or on your bus who are identified as having these allergies?

### You could be a life saver for one of our students!

Recognize symptoms, Respond to the symptoms, Help Prevent Exposure

**Recognize symptoms:** Look at the total child and listen to what they are saying!

- Skin and mouth: Swelling, redness, rash, itchiness, blueness around mouth  
lips and tongue swollen, scratchy or sore throat, difficulty swallowing, drooling,  
speech sounds different
- Respiratory: Coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing
- Gastrointestinal: Painful stomach, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Ask the student questions and listen carefully. They often know that they are reacting to something, may have a sense of doom and may feel generally not well.
  - ✓ Have you seen a reaction or heard someone describe one?  
Each person is unique in the way they react and it may be different than what you expect.

### **Respond:**

- Sit the student down and keep them calm.  
If they have had a reaction before they are typically very frightened. They may also be worried that they have eaten something they should not have and could be in "trouble."
- Determine if they have an adrenaline self injector with them or if it is in the health room or classroom. Send someone to get it if needed.
- Read the directions on the label of the self injector. The student may know how to use it but is often unable to do it themselves. Use the self injector to give the medication to the individual.
- Have someone call 911
- Provide the liquid or pill form of antihistamine medication if instructed by Emergency Plan and the student can swallow.
  - ✓ Determine what the rules are in your school and in your state for helping a student or an adult use an adrenaline self injector. The most common type is called an EpiPen. A video on how to use this device is at [www.epipen.com](http://www.epipen.com)

### **Prevent Exposure:**

- An Emergency Plan will be developed by the school nurse, parents and the student along with other school staff. Several copies will be available with the medication, in the classroom, health room and on the school bus.
- No eating is allowed on the school bus.
- Students in the classroom with the student who has allergies and their parents will be asked to help keep the student from being exposed to peanuts/tree nuts. They will receive notification at least twice a year.
- The student will have a safety plan for the lunchroom, for classroom celebrations and for field trips.
- Students will be encouraged by school staff and parents to become self advocates.

Go to Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network at [www.foodallergies.com](http://www.foodallergies.com) for more information