

A Checklist for Elementary Schools

While it is impossible to create a risk-free environment, school staff and parents can take important steps to minimize potentially fatal allergic reactions. Accurate records, written protocols, staff education, parental support, and classroom/school rules should all be considered. Use this checklist to develop and implement your school's plan.

- Identify all students who have anaphylactic allergies at the beginning of the school year.
- Receive written notification from the allergic child's physician regarding specific allergens to avoid, as well as authorization for administration of an epinephrine auto-injector.
- Establish/review strategies with the parent of the allergic child that will promote a safe school environment such as:
 - A picture of the child (to post for teacher recognition)
 - Specific information on the child's food or environmental allergies
 - Use of a medic alert bracelet to identify the child's specific allergies (<http://www.medicalert.ca/en/why/assistance.asp>)
 - Authorization and directions for administration of emergency medication (see sample Emergency Treatment Plan)
 - Emergency medication is labeled with the child's name and expiry date
 - Emergency medications are stored in safe, unlocked and accessible storage areas that are known to all staff
 - Call 911 for transportation to hospital
 - Telephone numbers for parents and alternate emergency contacts
 - Posting of the emergency treatment plan in accessible locations in the school
 - Annual review of the emergency treatment plan to ensure that it is current.
- Work with the parent of the allergic child and the Public Health Nurse assigned to your school to update your school staff, lunchroom/playground supervisors, bus drivers, parents, parent-teacher association, volunteers and other students about:
 - Understanding allergies and their potential severity
 - Recognizing symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction
 - Reviewing the emergency treatment plan
 - Administering the epinephrine auto-injector
 - Identifying measures to avoid allergens (i.e. cross contamination of foods).
- Gain the cooperation of other parents in the school by working with the parent of the allergic child to:
 - Organize information sessions
 - Set up information displays
 - Send out letters at the beginning of the school year explaining the need for special rules (see sample Letter to Parents for Creating a Peanut-Free Classroom).

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- Take the following steps to help create a safer classroom:
 - Discuss with the allergic child how to approach the teacher if he/she is having a reaction.
 - Listen to and believe the child when they tell you they are having a reaction or think they may have had an exposure to an allergen
 - Allergic children do not participate in garbage disposal within the classroom
 - Allergic children eat only the foods they bring from home
 - Trading and sharing of food is not allowed
 - Allergic children keep the same locker/desk throughout the year if possible
 - Thorough hand washing with soap and water is completed before and after meals
 - Desks and eating surfaces are cleaned after meals
 - Avoid using problem foods in crafts or other activities
 - All parents are asked to provide detailed labeling on foods they send into the classroom for sharing
 - Focus on activities, rather than food, to mark special occasions. It may be safer not to plan class celebrations around food
 - Inform the allergic child's parents well in advance of special activities involving food (i.e. parties, school trips)
 - Provide appropriate instruction for older students who may be responsible for supervising classrooms
 - Ensure that substitute teachers and school volunteers are aware of the children with allergies
 - Be aware that bullying behaviors are sometimes directed toward allergic children.

- Take the following steps to help create safer conditions outside the classroom:
 - Have plans in place to ensure safe field trips or extra-curricular activities (i.e. call ahead, bring an epinephrine auto-injector)
 - Permission slips for off-site activities include information on allergies
 - Consider not allowing children to take food outside at recess
 - Thorough hand washing with soap and water should be completed before and after meals
 - If foods are ordered-in or students are eating out at commercial sources, ask for a list of ingredients
 - Ensure food preparation/handling areas are kept clean of allergens.
 - Remind staff/parents to use clean utensils when preparing foods for the allergic child
 - Allergic children do not participate in garbage disposal outside the classroom.

Adapted from material developed by Middlesex-London Health Unit in collaboration with the Allergy Asthma Information Association and may be reproduced without permission provided that Middlesex-London Health Unit is properly acknowledged as the source. Revised September 2008 by WECHU.