



# Resource Guide for the Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies

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# Marquardt School District 15 Resource Guide for the Management of Students with Life- Threatening Food Allergies

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### FORMS

Parent Letter with Check List
Individual Health Care Plan
Annual Allergy History Form
Emergency Action Form
Sample Teacher Form
Annual Physician Statement for school menu modifications
Lunchroom Table Preference Form

## **Introduction**

Marquardt School District 15 will meet the needs of students with life-threatening food allergies through individual plans that are developed collaboratively among the student, student's parents, physician, and school team in accordance with applicable law and applicable District policy.

It is our goal as a District to provide a safe learning environment for all of our children, including those with life-threatening allergies. Although the risk to students with these allergies in the schools cannot be completely eliminated, it can be greatly reduced. Reducing this risk is a shared responsibility of families and the schools.

This resource guide is to serve as a guideline outlining the responsibilities for the student, families, and school system.

# Overview of Life-Threatening Food Allergies

## What is a food allergy?

- A food allergy is a medical condition in which exposure to a food triggers a harmful immune response. The immune response, called an allergic reaction, occurs because the immune system attacks proteins in the food that are normally harmless. The proteins that trigger the reaction are called allergens.
- The symptoms of an allergic reaction to food can range from mild (itchy mouth, a few hives) to severe (throat tightening, difficulty breathing).
- Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that is sudden in onset and can cause death

## Allergic Reaction Characteristics

Allergic reactions to foods vary and can range from mild to severe, life-threatening reactions. Every food-allergic reaction has the possibility of developing into a life-threatening reaction and potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction. A life-threatening reaction can occur within minutes or hours after exposure to the allergen. Some individuals may react to just touching, or inhaling the allergen, while for others, consumption of a miniscule amount of an allergenic food can cause a life-threatening allergic reaction. Most serious reactions follow actual ingestion (eating) of the food. The severity of a reaction is not predictable. Because there may be a cumulative effect from past exposures to an allergen, the severity of a future exposure cannot be predicted.

Bee/insect stings, as well as medications and latex, also have the potential of causing life-threatening reactions. It must be noted that susceptibility to bee stings, medications, and latex is not related to food allergy.

Allergies can affect almost any part of the body and cause various symptoms. Anaphylaxis involves the most dangerous symptoms including but not limited to: breathing difficulties, a drop in blood pressure, or shock, which are potentially fatal. Common signs and symptoms of allergic/anaphylactic reactions may include:

- Hives
- Itching (of any part of body)
- Runny nose
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Change of voice/hoarseness
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Throat tightness of closing
- Swelling (of any body parts)
- Red, watery eyes
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficulty breathing
- Sense of doom

## **Guidelines for Students with Food Allergies**

The student with food allergies is the most important member of the safety team. The student, having age-appropriate education, should be able to tell what their food allergies are. It is important to make the student aware of what accommodations they should be receiving so that they might assist appropriately. Students with life-threatening food allergies are asked to follow these guidelines:

1. Recognize the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction.
2. Know where the epinephrine auto-injector is kept and who has access to the epinephrine auto-injector(s).
3. Inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
4. Carry your own epinephrine auto-injector, when age and ability- appropriate.
5. Avoid sharing or trading snacks, lunches or drinks.
6. Wash hands before and after eating.
7. Report teasing, bullying and threats to an adult authority.
8. Ask about ingredients for all food offered. If unsure that the food is allergen-safe, do NOT take or eat the food.
9. Develop a habit of always reading the ingredients on a food label before eating food.
10. Learn to become a self-advocate as you get older
11. Do not board the bus if you are experiencing an allergic reaction
12. Develop a relationship with the school nurse and teacher/team leader to assist in identifying issues related to the management of allergies in school.

## **Guidelines for Parents/Guardians**

Parents/Guardians are their children's first teachers. It is important for Parents/Guardians to age-appropriately educate, their food allergic child as well as communicate information received from the food allergic child's doctors, etc. Preparing, role-playing and practicing procedures in advance will help everyone feel prepared in case of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to follow these guidelines:

1. Indicate your child's allergies on the annual health questionnaire form of your child's allergies prior to the beginning of the school year (or as soon as possible after a diagnosis).
2. Complete and return the following forms....
  - (a) The Annual Allergy History Form
  - (b) Complete and have your physician sign:
    - The Emergency Action Form
    - Annual Physician Modified Meal Request Form, if appropriate
  - (c) The Lunchroom Table Preference Form for elementary schools
3. Communicate with all staff members who will be in contact with the child (preferably before the beginning of the school year).
4. Discuss development and implementation of the IHCP (Individualized Health Care Plan) & EAP (Emergency Action Plan) with the school nurse, if appropriate.
5. Decide if additional antihistamine and epinephrine auto-injectors will be kept in the school, aside from the one in the nurse's office or designated area, and if so, where.

6. Periodically check for expiration dates and provide the school with current medications (epinephrine auto-injectors).
7. Notify the school nurse if your child has experienced any changes in medical status or if there are any changes in medications.
8. Make sure your child knows how to self-administer his/her medication before expecting self-administration at school, if age-appropriate.
9. Provide a Medic Alert bracelet for your child, if appropriate.
10. Notify supervisors of any before and after school activities, sponsors of events, and clubs regarding your child's allergy and provide necessary medication.
11. Consider attending your child's field trips as a chaperone or participating in class parties or events, if possible and if requested.
12. Provide safe classroom snacks for your own child, if appropriate.
13. For District provided meals, ingredient information can be found on the MSD15 Food and Nutrition Services website or you may contact the Food Service Department for menus and food labels.
14. Provide the Annual Meal Modification Form, signed by a physician to the health office and Food Service Department.
15. Educate your child in the self-management of his/her allergy.
16. Arrange for your child to carry his/her own epinephrine auto-injector, when appropriate and if approved by your child's physician, or know where the epinephrine auto-injector is located.
17. As age and developmentally appropriate, encourage your child to:
  - Recognize safe and unsafe foods and do not share snacks, lunches, utensils, or drinks.
  - Read ingredient labels before eating food.
  - Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
  - Inform others of allergies and specific needs.
  - Report teasing or threats regarding his/her allergy to an adult authority.
18. Empower your child to self-advocate in situations that he/she might perceive as compromising his/her health.
19. Review the Guidelines for Students with Food Allergies periodically with your child.
20. Provide the nurse/health aides with the licensed medical provider's statement if student no longer has allergies.

## **Guidelines for Administration**

Administrators assist school staff in providing a safe environment for students with life-threatening food allergies. Educators are encouraged to foster independence on the part of the student, based upon his/her developmental level. It is the responsibility of the administrators to follow these guidelines:

1. Annual review the ***MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies*** utilizing resources such as: *MSD15 School Board Policy 7:285*, the CDC's *Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs*, and the *National Association of School Nurses Allergies and Anaphylaxis Resources/Checklists*
2. Supervise and implement the School Board's food allergy policy and procedures.
3. Work with the school nurse to ensure that all staff working with students receive proper training.
4. Coordinate with the Director of Buildings and Grounds to provide training on proper cleaning and sanitation pertaining to food allergies.
5. Provide a location for medications and provide emergency communication devices for all school

- activities, including gym, lunch/mid-day recess, and transportation that involves a student with life-threatening allergies.
6. Notify the school bus contractor of food allergy policy and procedure. (Director of Health Services and Business Manager)
  7. Notify the bus contractor to provide training for all school bus drivers on life-threatening allergies, which includes calling 911 in an emergency. (Director of Health Services and Business Manager)
  8. Notify the bus contractor concerning the policy of no food consumption being allowed on school buses. Exemptions may include field trips, etc., with the permission of the principal. (Principal and/or Business Manager)
  9. At the elementary level, work with school nurse/health staff to arrange for an allergen-safe table in the lunchroom if specified on the Lunchroom Table Preference Form and notify lunch staff and custodial staff.
  10. Ensure emergency health information regarding specific high-risk students is provided to all staff, including substitutes.
  11. In conjunction with the Director of Food Services, facilitate the acquisition of ingredient lists for food products and classroom products available in the school. (Available on the MSD15 Food and Nutrition Services website or from the Food Service Department)
  - 12.
  13. Direct staff not to provide candy or food as rewards to students, when dealing with students with life threatening allergies.

## **Guidelines for the School Nurse/ Health Staff**

The School Nurses and Health Staff are an integral part in the prevention of allergic reactions and emergency care of children with food allergies. It is the responsibility of the district nurse, school nurses, and health aides to follow these guidelines:

1. Review the MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies annually.
2. Provide training and education for all staff on the policy and procedures for food allergies, including:
  - How to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
  - Review of high-risk areas
  - Steps to take to prevent exposure to allergens
  - How to respond to an emergency
  - How to administer an epinephrine auto-injector
3. Contact parents to obtain all allergy-related forms.
4. Review the Annual Allergy History Form
5. Write an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) for the students with life-threatening food allergies.
6. Meet with the student at the beginning of the year to familiarize the student with the Health Office and review procedures in the event of an emergency.
7. Identify and communicate with staff members working with the students and provide necessary information, including the IHCP & EAP.
8. Post and label locations of IHCP and emergency medications as indicated on the IHCP.

Epinephrine auto-injectors should be in a secure location but not locked. A copy of these documents should be in the health office sub folder.

9. At elementary level, work with school Principal to arrange for an allergen-safe table in the lunchroom, if specified on the Lunchroom Table Preference Form, and notify lunch staff and custodial staff.
10. Observe expiration dates and check allergy-related medications stored in the Health Office periodically to remind parents when new medication is needed.
11. Make sure substitute health staff are trained on the food allergy policy and procedures.
12. Be available to staff who are outside the building via a communication device.
13. Provide an Allergy Action Plan and medication plan for students with severe life-threatening allergies on field trips.
14. Maintain a list of all students with documented severe life-threatening allergies to share with the Principals and Assistant Principals, lunch/recess staff, and custodial staff
15. If necessary, the administrator or health staff should accompany the child to the hospital and contact the parents in the event of an emergency.

## **Guidelines for the Classroom Teachers**

Teachers are an essential component to the school team in the prevention of allergic reactions, care, and management of activities on behalf of students with food allergies. It is the responsibility of the classroom teachers to follow these guidelines:

1. Review the MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies annually.
2. Participate in annual in-service training on the identification of an allergic reaction, high-risk areas, reduction of exposure to allergens, and emergency response.
3. Be familiar with the Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and/or Emergency Action Plan (EAP) of any student in the classroom with life-threatening allergies.
4. Keep the student's plan in an identifiable and accessible location.
5. Participate in any team meetings in regard to a student with food allergies.
6. Leave information about students with life-threatening allergies available for substitute teachers in an organized and accessible format. If epinephrine auto-injectors is kept in the room, make them aware of the location of the medication.
7. Collaborate with school nurses and principal to utilize MSD15 Classroom Food Allergy Letter to communicate with the parents of all the students in the classroom. Include information regarding a specific food allergy in the letter to all families at the beginning of the year, and to any newly enrolled students.
8. Never question or hesitate to immediately initiate intervention if a student reports a sign of an allergic reaction
9. Contact the nurse or office immediately if a student exhibits signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction. Do not send another student, time is of the essence. Do not leave the child alone.
10. Plan to pick up and return necessary forms and medications from the Health Office if planning a field trip.
11. Wash your hands after eating if there is a student with a food allergy on your team or in your classroom.
12. Reinforce school guidelines on bullying and teasing to avoid the harassment of students with allergies.



13. Be willing to administer an epinephrine auto-injector if necessary. If unable or unwilling, designate an alternate staff member.
14. Do not allow a child to board the bus if the child is exhibiting symptoms of an allergic reaction.
15. Utilize the Field Trip Packet (found in the staff binders) and communicate field trip dates in advance.
16. Adapt curriculum, awards, and rewards or prizes by using non-food items in rooms where students having a life-threatening allergy may be present.

#### Snack/Lunch Time

1. If the teacher discovers unknown or restricted food in the classroom, intercede on behalf of the student with life-threatening allergies.
2. When necessary, have the students wipe down their own individual desk with district-approved cleaning supplies.
3. Reinforce hand washing/sanitizing before and after eating.
4. Work with parents to provide alternate snacks for students with allergies, if necessary.

## **Guidelines for Outside of Classroom Activities**

#### Field Trip

1. Review the MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies annually.
2. Teachers should choose field trips carefully to ensure that students with allergies have little or no allergen exposure. Review the students Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
3. Consider the presence/handling of any food item while on the field trip.
4. Review the required number of adults/chaperones required for the field trip when a student with food allergies is present. Be aware that additional chaperones may be required.
5. Provide timely notification of field trips to the nurse, parent/guardian, administration and food services so appropriate accommodations can be made, if necessary. Utilize the Fieldtrip Packet, found in the staff binder.
6. Discuss the field trip in advance with the parent/guardian of a student with life-threatening food allergies. You may invite the parent to accompany you on the field trip; however, it is not required.
7. A teacher will be assigned the responsibility for watching out for the student's welfare and handling any emergency. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Ensuring that the student with the food allergy has an allergen-safe lunch from school or food supplied by the parent/guardian
  - b. Carrying a communication device to be used in an emergency situation
  - c. Reviewing the student EAP
  - d. Carrying out and administering emergency medication as outlined in EAP

\*Implementation of these guidelines should occur at the onset of your field trip planning.

#### Coaches and Supervisors of School Sponsored Activities

1. Review the MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies annually.

2. Participate in annual in-service training on the identification of an allergic reaction, high-risk areas, reduction of exposure to allergens, and emergency response.
3. Provide the health staff with a list of students who will participate in the activity.
4. Review the IHCP and/or EAP with the health staff for any indicated students
5. Clearly identify who is responsible for keeping the epinephrine auto-injector or other medication, and where it will be kept.
6. Collect necessary equipment and medications from the student prior to the activity and return the medications to the student after the activity
7. Limit the presence of foods in extra-curricular activities (e.g., arts and crafts, celebrations, or other projects). Notify parents well in advance (2 days) of an activity using food. Work with parents to provide a safe alternative, if appropriate.
8. Make certain that an emergency communication device is always present.
9. Cover or tape Medic Alert identifications. They must not be removed for activities.
10. Be willing to administer medications in emergencies and be trained in first aid procedures or ensure there is another trained staff person available who is willing to administer medications in an emergency.
11. If the activity is off campus, identify the appropriate person responsible for taking the medication to the activity.

## **Guidelines for the Food Service Administration**

The Food & Nutrition Services Department will promote sound food handling practices to reduce the risk of cross-contamination with potential food allergens. The food services department cannot guarantee that food served in the general lunch program is allergen-free. Parents and students may contact food services to have access to reading food labels to identify the ingredients in the products used by the school's cafeteria. **If medically necessary, food services will make available an allergen-safe lunch substitute. It is ultimately the decision of the parent whether the student will buy the allergen-safe meal or will bring a lunch to school.** Food Service administration will:

1. Review the MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies annually.
2. Participate in annual in-service training on the identification of an allergic reaction, high-risk areas, reduction of exposure to allergens, and emergency response.
3. Have all food service employees properly trained on safe food handling procedures pertaining to food allergies, i.e., cross contamination.
4. Have food service employees trained on proper cleaning and sanitation pertaining to food allergies
5. Have product labels available for those who request them.
6. Speak with parents to discuss the student's allergy and be a part of the student's plan, if necessary.
7. Ensure that food service staff reviews the list of students with life-threatening allergies and needed information. List will be provided by school nurse/ health staff.
8. Make appropriate substitutions or modifications for meals served to students with food allergies, when requested by the parent and when a physician note is on file.
9. Provide allergen-safe meals for field trips, if requested.
10. Provide an annual in-service training on the identification of an allergic reaction, high-risk areas, reduction of exposure to allergens, and emergency response for Food Service Staff.

11. Collaborate with the school nurse and health staff to share appropriate allergy-related information.

## **Guidelines for Mid-Day Recess/Lunch Supervisors**

Teachers and staff responsible for lunch and/or mid-day PE shall be trained to recognize and respond to a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. Mid-Day PE/Lunch Supervisors should be responsible for the following:

1. Review the MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies annually.
2. Participate in annual in-service training on the identification of an allergic reaction, high-risk areas, reduction of exposure to allergens, and emergency response.
3. Take all complaints seriously from any student with a life-threatening allergy by immediately contacting the school health personnel, or school office.
4. Provide emergency treatment, dial 911, then inform the principal if the nurse/health staff is not available.
5. Be aware of the location of epinephrine auto-injectors and other emergency medications.
6. Allow only students whose parents requested the allergen-safe table to sit at the allergen-safe table. Other children may be permitted to sit at this table only with the approval of the school principal.
7. Supervise or perform the thorough cleaning of all tables after lunch with district-approved products.
8. Encourage hand washing or use of hand wipes for students after eating.

## **Guidelines for Director of Buildings and Grounds/Custodial Staff**

Custodians are trained to recognize and respond to a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. Custodians should be responsible for the following:

1. The Director of Buildings and Grounds will ensure training for custodians on proper cleaning and sanitations pertaining to food allergies.
2. Review the MSD15 Resource Guide for the Management of Student's with Life-Threatening Food Allergies annually.
3. Participate in all in-service training on the identification of food-allergic reactions, risk-reduction and emergency response procedures.
4. Take all complaints seriously from any student with a life-threatening allergy by immediately contacting the school health personnel, or school office.
5. Clean tables and chairs routinely after each lunch with school district-approved cleaning agents, with special attention given to designated allergen-safe eating areas. Use separate cloths for allergen safe tables.
6. Clean classrooms routinely with school district-approved cleaning agents, with special attention to those classrooms attended by students with severe food allergies. The Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) may direct the frequency of cleaning.