

Brighton Area Schools

MANAGING LIFE THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES IN THE SCHOOL SETTING – Guidelines and Practices

Students with food allergies have over-reactive immune systems that react to otherwise harmless elements of our diet and environment. During an allergic reaction to a food, the immune system reacts to a specific protein. The reaction can range from mild to severe and be life-threatening.

Anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe, potentially fatal systemic allergic reaction that can involve several different body systems. Common foods that can trigger anaphylaxis are peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, fish, milk, eggs and soy.

Symptoms can include:

Mouth	Itching, tingling or swelling of lips/tongue/mouth
Skin	Hives, itchy rash, swelling of the face or extremities
Gut	Nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
Throat	Tightening of throat, hoarseness, hacking cough
Lung	Shortness of breath, cough, wheeze
Heart	Thready pulse, low blood pressure, fainting, pallor

The most dangerous symptoms include difficulty breathing and/or a drop in blood pressure that can lead to shock. Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours following an exposure. The initial symptoms may appear to resolve only to return in a delayed wave of symptoms 2- 4 hours later. This delayed reaction may not respond to either epinephrine or steroids and can be fatal.

When in doubt it is better to give the EPIPEN and seek medical attention (Call 911). Fatalities occur when the epinephrine is delayed or withheld.

In an effort to provide the safest possible environment for students, Brighton Area Schools has the following guidelines in place for managing students with life threatening food allergies:

Responsibilities of Students with Food Allergies

- > Will take as much age appropriate responsibility as possible for avoiding allergens.
- > Will eat only food brought from home or approved by parent/guardian for consumption.
- > Will not trade or share food.
- > Will wash hands before and after eating.
- > Will learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- > Will promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.

GOAL : The student will take more responsibility over time for self management of his/her food allergy.

Parent Responsibility of Students with Food Allergies

- >Notify the school of the child's allergies-whether in writing or by setting up an appointment to meet with school staff.
- >Notify the transportation department if the student will be riding the bus. Arrange to speak to the bus driver.
- >Provide a medical alert ID bracelet/necklace for the child.
- >Provide the school with current medical instructions signed by a physician and the parent.
- >Provide the school with medications, including **EPIPENs** and replace after use or expiration.
- >Participate in the development of an emergency plan for their child. This plan may include a parental request to send a letter home to other classroom parents regarding the student's food allergy and/or an allergen free table in the cafeteria.
- >Educate the child in the self-management of food allergy.
- >Provide safe foods for class parties and special occasions.
- >***Maintain, at all times, current up to date emergency phone numbers and contact information on the student's emergency card.***

School's Responsibility

- >Maintain and enforce policy for reducing food allergy risks in classrooms and eating areas.
- >Provide opportunity for school personnel to receive annual in-service training and review of emergency procedures including EPIPEN administration.
- >Make available eating areas that are designated allergy free if the parent requests.
- >Notify the following staff of the student's food allergy:
 - *Administrators and secretaries
 - *Classroom teachers – including art, music and physical education
 - *Student Nutrition and food services staff
 - *Lunch room/ playground staff
 - *Information will be included in the sub plans for all teachers.
- >Educate classmates to avoid endangering, isolating, or stigmatizing students with food allergies. Enforce a no sharing food policy and encourage all students to keep their hands clean.
- >Enlist the support of all classroom parents to minimize the risk of accidental exposure for the allergic student.
- > Inform parents of the allergic child whenever a classroom project involving food or cooking will take place. An attempt should be made to minimize or modify classroom activities involving food whenever possible.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Field Trips

- >Field trip permission form must include all emergency contact numbers and pertinent medical information.
- >All emergency medication will be taken on the trip and it is the responsibility of the teacher to pick medication up from the office before leaving the building.
- >Ensure that staff have an emergency communication device (cell phone etc) available at all times on the trip.
- >Avoid high-risk places. Consider where and what students will eat for lunch.
- >Hand wipes or sanitizer should be available for hand washing.
- >Invite parents of at risk students to accompany their child on field trips-
The student's safety or attendance must not be conditioned on the parent's presence.

Transportation

Parents may request that the student sit directly behind the bus driver and to the driver's right.

Bus drivers will be instructed in EPIPEN administration and signs/symptoms of anaphylaxis.

Bus driver will have access to a communication device at all times.