



ALLERGY & DIETARY NEED HANDBOOK





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INTRODUCTION

West Fargo Public Schools is committed to the safety of all students. Although the health needs are unique for each child, the intent of this handbook is to establish consistent, systemic practices to be followed within the district.

This handbook is provided as guidance for all students in the district, and with the following goals:

1. Provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students with food allergies
2. Reduce the likelihood of severe, or potentially life-threatening, allergic reactions while at school
3. Ensure a rapid and effective response in the event of a severe or life-threatening allergic reaction
4. Protect the right of food-allergic students to participate in all school activities
5. Provide information to school staff to gain a better understanding of the needs of students with food allergies
6. Provide staff with simple checklists on how to accommodate a food-allergic student and minimize risk

This resource was developed to address the needs of students and others with food allergies, with guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control](#).

Most food allergy reactions occur to one of eight common foods: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, and soy. However, any food can cause an allergic reaction.

The level and severity of reactions can vary considerably among individuals with food allergies. Therefore, the approach to prevent and treatment is tailored to each student's needs.

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ANAPHYLAXIS

Anaphylaxis, sometimes called allergic shock, is a potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after an exposure to an allergen. It occurs when the body's immune system reacts to harmless substances as though they are harmful invaders. Some individuals react from simply touching or inhaling the allergen; for others, it may be the consumption of a small amount of the allergen. The severity of the reaction is not predictable.

When the inflammatory symptoms are widespread and systemic, the reaction is termed *anaphylaxis*. Symptoms can occur immediately or up to two hours following exposure. Symptoms include:

- ✓ Shortness of breath with a repetitive cough
- ✓ Pale, blue, or flushed skin
- ✓ Faint or weak pulse, irregular heartbeat, and dizziness
- ✓ Tightness or closing of the throat, trouble swallowing, and changes to voice
- ✓ Swelling of the tongue and/or lips
- ✓ Itchy, running nose; sneezing
- ✓ Rash, widespread redness, and swelling of the skin
- ✓ Abdominal cramping, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
- ✓ Anxiety and/or confusion

Fatalities can occur when epinephrine is withheld or delayed. When in doubt, medical advice states it is best to administer a prescribed epinephrine auto-injection; it can be self-administered or by trained staff. Once the injection is given, 911 is called. The building administrator, or a delegate, is to verbally notify the student's parent/guardian as soon as possible.

If a student is experiencing an allergic reaction, never leave them alone or send them on their own to the nurse's office.

Following the allergic episode, the school is responsible for documenting the incident and filing it in the student's record.

DISTRICT BEST PRACTICES

West Fargo Public Schools addresses life-threatening allergic reaction prevention in all classrooms, inclusive of all classroom activities and projects, school buses, and instructional and recreational areas.

The Food Service Department provides elementary schools with menus free of products containing peanuts or tree nuts. Efforts are made to omit from the breakfast and lunch menus any products labeled to indicate it was manufactured in a factory that also processes peanuts and tree nuts.

Peanut products at the middle schools and high schools are limited to pre-packaged peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and peanut butter packets; each has a clear label of its contents.

Due to the complexity and diversity of allergies, it is impossible to entirely omit an allergen from an environment. Rather than restricting an allergen throughout a cafeteria or entire school, schools adopt allergen-aware protocols for classrooms and the cafeteria that includes the following:

- ✓ Permit students to bring lunches from home that may include an allergen of other students
- ✓ Enforce district policies that prohibit the sharing of homemade snacks or treats with the entire class
- ✓ Maintain holidays, birthdays, and other moments of celebration as food-free
- ✓ Accommodate students with known life-threatening allergies by:
 - Establishing and labelling allergen-aware classrooms
 - Establishing and labelling allergen-aware cafeteria tables
 - Enforcing adequate cleaning and disinfection of surfaces
- ✓ Provide school staff with annual anaphylaxis training
- ✓ Utilize district checklists to ensure unity in the management of food allergies

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Establishing Allergen-Aware Locations

Depending on the severity of an individual student's allergy, the health care team and parent/guardian determine the approaches to take for the student's safety.

Allergen-Aware Classroom

When an [allergen-aware classroom](#) has been established, a letter is sent to the parent/guardian of all the classroom's students explaining the allergen is not to be sent to school for snack time. The classroom is labeled as an allergen-aware environment on the exterior side of the classroom door. Additional coordination occurs in the cleaning and disinfection of the classroom surfaces.

Allergen-Aware Cafeteria Table

The table is labeled as an [allergen-aware table](#). The table is available to students known to have a life-threatening allergy and their peers who eat a school provided meal; students bringing a packed lunch from home are not to eat at the table. Building custodians wash and sanitize the allergen-aware table with an exclusive bucket.

Student Safety

When staff are notified of a life-threatening food allergy in a student, they work with the parent/guardian to gather the necessary documents, information, and medication to develop and implement an appropriate safety plan.

Staff Training

Staff participate in annual training, either in-person or through an instructional video, that addresses allergy symptoms, anaphylaxis symptoms, and administration of an epinephrine auto-injection.

Related District Policies

- FCAA-AP: [Accommodating Students with Allergies & Special Dietary Needs](#)
- ACBD-AP: [Medication Administration](#)
 - ACBD-E2: [Prescription or Over the Counter \(OTC\) Authorization for Medication Administration](#)
 - ACBD-E8: [Emergency Care Plan](#)

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APPENDIX

When choosing a nut-free snack for your child, it is important to always check the ingredient label on the package to ensure it is free of peanuts and tree nuts of all kinds. Check the ingredient label at the time of each purchase as the manufacturer may have changed equipment, processing, or product lines since your last purchase. Do not purchase items with an allergy or ingredient alert such as the following:

- **MAY CONTAIN PEANUTS AND/OR TREE NUTS**
- **PROCESSED ON SHARED EQUIPMENT WITH PEANUTS AND/OR TREE NUTS**
- **MANUFACTURED IN A PLANT THAT PROCESSES PEANUT AND/OR TREE NUTS**
- **CONTAINS PEANUT AND/OR TREE NUT INGREDIENTS**

This list is to serve only as a resource; it is not complete and is subject to manufacturer recalls and mislabeling.

NUT FREE SNACK SUGGESTIONS		
PRODUCT	RECOMMENDED	AVOID
Fruits & Vegetables		
applesauce		
fresh fruit		strawberries
fruit snacks	Betty Crocker, Market Pantry	Kellogg's
Dairy		
string cheese		
yogurt	Dannon's Danimals	
Cereal		
toasted whole grain oats	General Mill's Cheerios	
cinnamon and sugar wholegrain squares	General Mill's Cinnamon Toast Crunch	
Miscellaneous		
crackers	Nabisco's Cheese Nips, Nabisco's Ritz, Nabisco's Saltines (original), Pepperidge Farm's Goldfish (original, colors, cheddar), Nabisco's Handi-Snacks (cheddar)	Ritz Bitz
cookies	Nabisco's Nilla Wafers, Nabisco's Teddy Grahams (cinnamon, chocolate, honey, chocolate chip)	
popcorn	Pop Secret, Act II, Jolly Time	