How to Prevent and Respond to Food and Other Allergic Reactions

Kids Comprehensive Services, LLC
OBJECTIVES

• Develop an awareness of basic food allergies
• Learn why early childhood programs should address food allergies
• Learn the difference between allergic and intolerance
• Understand how teachers/staff can help prevent allergic reactions
• Know the proper procedure in the event of an allergic reaction
• **Food allergy** is a potentially serious immune response to eating or coming in contact with certain foods.

• A food allergy occurs when the immune system:
  1) Identifies a food as dangerous
  2) Tries to protect body by releasing histamine into blood when that food is eaten.
FOOD ALLERGIES

• In the United states, an estimated 12 million people have food allergies.
• Food allergies cause roughly 30,000 emergency room visits and 100 to 200 deaths per year.
• Food allergies affect as many as 5% of infants less than three years of age and 3% to 4% of adults.
• Increased presence of students with food allergies
FOOD ALLERGIES

VS

FOOD INTOLERANCE

FOOD ALLERGY

• Potentially serious immune response to certain foods
• Affects different organs in the body
• IgE release of histamine
• Immediate reaction to a few hour

FOOD INTOLERANCE

• Absence of a specific chemical or enzyme needed to digest a substance
• Problem in digestive system mostly but can include other organs
• Delayed response
• Not life-threatening
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

• Skin problems
  – Hives (red spots that look like mosquito bites)
  – Itchy red skin rashes (eczema, also called atopic dermatitis)
  – Swelling

• Breathing problems
  – Sneezing
  – Wheezing
  – Throat tightness
  – Trouble swallowing

• Stomach symptoms
  – Nausea
  – Vomiting
  – Diarrhea

• Circulation symptoms
  – Pale skin
  – Light-headedness
  – Drop in blood pressure
  – Loss of consciousness
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Trouble swallowing
- Shortness of breath
- Repetitive coughing
- Voice change
- Nausea & vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal cramping
- Swelling
- Hives
- Eczema
- Itchy red rash
- Drop in blood pressure
- Loss of consciousness
Ms. Williams observed Renee sharing a piece of candy with Tiffany on the playground. Tiffany starts wheezing and having difficulty breathing. (Allergic reaction or Food Intolerance)
Ms. James gave Robert a new breakfast selection of oatmeal. By 6 p.m. Robert was complaining of a stomach ache and had diarrhea. (Allergic reaction or Food Intolerance)
LIFE-THREATENING REACTION: ANAPHYLAXIS

A serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death

Food  Insect Venom  Medications  Latex
TREATMENT OF ANAPHYLAXIS

• Epinephrine by injection is the treatment for a serious reaction
• Quick administration is key – a delay can be deadly
• Follow-up care and observation in the emergency room for 4-6 hours
• Biphasic reactions occur about 20% of the time (symptoms improve or disappear, then the 2nd wave can be worse than the first)
COMMON FOOD ALLERGIES

Approximately 90 percent of all food allergies are caused by eight foods, including the following:

1. Milk
2. Eggs
3. Wheat
4. Soy
5. Peanuts
6. Tree nuts
7. Fish
8. Shellfish
PREVENTION

• Avoid food Allergen
  • Know ingredients in all food products
  • Keep food surfaces clean to prevent cross contamination
  • Introduce new foods one at a time with close observation
COW’S MILK AND SOY PROTEIN

- Breastfed infant may have colic
- Vomiting after feeding is the most common symptom of milk and soy allergy
- Itching dry rash or eczema is another subtle symptom
- Severe reaction causes hives and difficulty breathing
EGGS

- Egg allergies are due to the protein in the egg white
- Beware of hidden egg ingredients
  - Breaded foods
  - Egg glazed breads
- Egg substitutes still contain the same protein
WHEAT AND GLUTEN

• Two types of allergic reactions
  – Hives and/or wheezing which occurs immediately
  – Abdominal pain, diarrhea, and irritability
• Celiac disease – causes poor weight gain and slow growth due to gluten which is found in wheat, rye and barley
PEANUTS AND TREE NUTS

- Two of the most common allergies in children
- Contained in many food products unexpectedly
  - Foods cooked in peanut oil
  - Used in food preparation as a glue to hold food items together
- Read Labels carefully
FISH AND SHELLFISH

- Shellfish is the most common and the most dangerous allergen
  - Shrimp, Lobster, or clams
  - Breathing the fumes or any contact can cause severe reaction
- Fish allergies may not include shellfish
  - Must avoid any type of fish
  - Breathing the fumes or any contact can cause severe reaction
OTHER COMMON ALLERGENS

- Pollen
- Dogs
- Trees
- Grass
- Dust
- Smoke
MANAGING FOOD AND OTHER ALLERGIC REACTIONS

• Shared responsibility among child care center, families and health care providers
• Avoidance of allergens
• Be prepared in case of a reaction
Hand Washing is the most effective way to control the spread of allergens:

- Arrival into classroom
- After sand/water play
- After blowing nose or using toilet
- After touching garbage, floor, pets
- Before eating, drinking, or handling food
- Before /after diapering or toileting each child
WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS FOOD ALLERGIES?

• Responsibility for health and safety of children at child care and school

• Food allergy is the most common cause of anaphylaxis.

• Need for immediate response

• Factor when dealing with other chronic conditions.

• Unique social and emotional challenges
WHY IS COMPREHENSIVE FOOD ALLERGY POLICY NEEDED?

• Increased presence of students with food allergy; 18% increase (children under 18)

• All students need to be safe and ready to learn
  – Teens are the highest risk group for fatal allergic reactions

• Emergencies are inevitable
  – Proactive approach rather than reactive
• A life-threatening food allergy can be considered a disability under federal laws
  – Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
  – The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
  – The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the ADA Amendments of 2008 (ADAA)

• Assure compliance for privacy and confidentiality
  – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and
  – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

• Civil rights claim on behalf of student
  – Follow the laws or parents/caregivers can file a claim
CHILD CARE PROVIDER ROLE

- For children under eighteen months, a list of foods that have already been introduced
- Obtain written history that contains any special nutrition and feeding needs or allergies
- Have written menus a month in advance and available to parents
- Communicate with Parents/ Guardians
FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN

• Identify students with food allergies
• Provide for administration of medication
• Follow DC and federal laws
• Written management plans
• Each child with an allergy should have a care plan.
• The child’s caregiver/teacher should receive training.
• Parents/guardians and staff should arrange for the facility to have the necessary medication.
• Caregivers should promptly and properly administer medications according to care plan.
• Notification of allergic reaction should be given to the parents and primary care provider.
• The facility should contact emergency medical services system immediately if severe symptoms are observed or mild symptoms persist.
CHILD CARE PROVIDER POLICY

• Each individual child’s food allergies should be posted in the classroom where staff can view them.

• Parents of all children who might provide treats or bring any food into the facility should be advised to avoid any food allergens a child in class may have.

• The written child care plan, a mobile phone, and the proper medication for appropriate treatment must be transported with the child on any field trips or outside the facility.

• A food allergy can be life-threatening and can be considered a disability under federal laws.
EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- The Address of the Center is: ______________________________
- Fire and Police Emergency:  **9-1-1**
- Non-Emergency Calls:  **3-1-1**
- Nearest Hospital:  ________________________________
- List of phone numbers to reach parents: ________________
- Numbers to call if I cannot reach parents: ________________
- In case neither reached call: __________________________
- **Poison Center Helpline Number: 1-800-222-1222**
  (posted in location readily available in emergency)
  (standard 149.2)
REFERENCES

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