



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

# EDUCATION

## OSSE Food Allergy Awareness Week May 13-19, 2018

OSSE is observing Allergy Awareness Week (AAW) for the first time! Food Allergy Awareness Week is an effort to increase awareness of the seriousness of food allergies through the coordination of several events and activities.

This year's Allergy Awareness Week focuses on food allergies and its impact on attendance in schools. Throughout the week, OSSE encourages schools to participate by implementing Allergy Awareness Week activities in classrooms. Outcomes from participating in these activities, will increase the food allergy knowledge and awareness of the students. By the end of the week, classrooms should understand:

- How to identify food allergy signs and symptoms
- Importance of responding Face, Airways, Stomach, Total Body (F.A.S.T.)<sup>4</sup> to a food related allergic reaction
- How food allergies impact attendance
- How to Stand Up to Bullying

### Weekly Activities

#### **Monday** Intro to Allergy Awareness Week (AAW)

- Staff is encouraged to teach the mainstays of food allergies and anaphylaxis reactions.
- Use the curriculum from this [link](#) containing the 10 facts about food allergies to teach students. The first things they should know about food allergies and anaphylaxis reactions are all outlined in the poster.
- It is important for students to know that they have access to epinephrine auto-injectors while in school. On this day, OSSE encourages educators to briefly discuss to the students the Access to Emergency Epinephrine Act of 2015.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Tuesday** **Teal** Tuesday!

- Teal is the official awareness color for food allergies
- Students have the option of wearing something teal to take a stand against food allergies, as well as support their classmates who may have food allergies.

#### **Wednesday** Anaphylaxis Symptoms

- The students should be familiar with the signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction in the event that one occurs around them, or even to them directly.
- Use the poster from this [link](#) containing the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in order to help students identify cases in which anaphylaxis is occurring.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://osse.dc.gov/publication/access-emergency-epinephrine-schools-amendment-act-2015>

- This poster differentiates between the symptoms that are considered mild, and the symptoms that are most severe. This increases student awareness on how to identify symptoms F.A.S.T. (Face, Airways, Stomach, Total Body) – Food Allergy Research and Education
- OSSE also has their own Anaphylaxis Symptoms Poster (available upon request).
- It is important for the students to know that they have access to epinephrine auto-injectors while in school. Briefly discuss to the students the Access to Emergency Epinephrine Act of 2015.
  - Simply mention that if they experience, or witness someone else experiencing, an anaphylactic reaction, immediately tell a staff member because:
    - The school is required to have two trained staff members who are able to professionally administer the epinephrine auto-injector.
    - The school is also required to have two packs of undesignated epinephrine injectors for students who do not already have one at the school.

#### **Thursday** Numbers Matter: Allergies and Attendance

- Learning environments should be safe, allowing the student to focus solely on ideal academic outcomes and positive social interactions. Having “Allergy Friendly Schools” promotes implementation of clear and consistent policies that decrease the likelihood of food-related allergic reactions in the school environment.
- Administrators should go over the list of facts provided below on allergies and attendance in school with teachers.
  - In surveys completed by parents or caregivers of children, 34 percent reported that food allergy had an impact on the child’s school attendance<sup>2</sup>
  - The constant quest to protect and create a safe environment can result in unintentional segregation<sup>3</sup>
    - Sitting at special tables
    - Students begin to feel shame and embarrassment
  - Bullying can lead to a decrease in school attendance<sup>4</sup>
    - More than one-third of children and teens with food allergies reported being bullied because of their food allergies
    - 82 percent of bullied children with food allergies say the bullying occurred at school
    - 65 percent reported feeling depressed or embarrassed
- Teachers can use this day to review current school policies and discuss how they can improve school and classroom efforts in keeping or becoming more Allergy Friendly.

**Friday** Drawing contest submission deadline! Take some time during the day to encourage students to enter and review what they have learned over the week.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16597075>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.allergicliving.com/2014/08/21/food-allergy-at-school-avoiding-shame-segregation/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.foodallergyawareness.org/education/bullying-16/bullying\\_-\\_general\\_information-9/](https://www.foodallergyawareness.org/education/bullying-16/bullying_-_general_information-9/)