

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH LIFE-THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES

General Guidelines

The following procedures provide school staff and parents guidance for providing reasonable and appropriate care for students with life-threatening food allergies who attend and eat meals/snacks in District schools. Accommodations will be made during normal school hours. This applies to all District schools as well as all schools where APS Food and Nutrition Services provide breakfast, lunch, or snacks. Principals are asked to consult with Food and Nutrition Services and Nursing Services before proceeding with a school plan.

Definition

A food allergy is defined as a reaction of the body's immune system to a certain component, usually a protein, in a food or ingredient¹. The foreign particle triggers the body to produce immunoglobulin E (IgE) which then triggers other cells to release substances that cause inflammation. A food allergy is not an intolerance or sensitivity, as these do not trigger an IgE immune response. Reactions can differ in severity and the most severe anaphylactic reactions can be life-threatening. A licensed physician must determine and provide documentation of a student's life-threatening food allergy.

Family Responsibility

- Inform school of student's life-threatening food allergy and complete necessary medical forms annually. Provide physician documentation of student's allergy and treatment for reactions.
- Annually, at the beginning of each school year, have a licensed physician complete and sign the "Special Diet Prescription Form" and return copies to the school nurse. Copies will be sent to the school cafeteria manager and Food and Nutrition Services-Special Needs Dietitian. This form can be accessed from the district website, the school nurse, and school cafeteria manager.
- Provide school with medication authorization form signed by physician, medications, and emergency contact information. Update school of any changes to student's condition or treatment for reactions.
- When appropriate, provide the school with a letter requesting community support for providing snacks that are free of the allergen in question (see the school administration for distribution).

Student Responsibility

- Take as much responsibility as possible for avoiding potential allergens by not trading or sharing foods and washing hands before and after eating.
- Learn to recognize symptoms of allergic reactions and inform an adult if an exposure to an allergen or reaction occurs. If age appropriate, learn how to self-administer treatment.

School Administration Responsibility

- Ensure that all parties (teachers, nurse, cafeteria manager, food & nutrition services dietitian, staff members, and bus transportation services) are aware of student's life-

¹ Taylor SL, Hefle SL, Munoz-Furlong A. Food allergies and avoidance diets. *Nutrition Today*. 1999;34:15-22.

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threatening food allergy and receive training and education for preventing, identifying and treating reactions. If necessary, make special arrangements for off-campus field trips and bus transportation.

- Educate students to avoid endangering, isolating, stigmatizing, or harassing students with life-threatening food allergies and make necessary provisions to ensure student is included in regular school activities.
- When the allergy creates a substantial limitation on a student's ability to learn, a Section 504 plan may be appropriate. The 504 plan will outline reasonable accommodations for managing a student's food allergy in school. **While it is not possible to guarantee a "peanut-free" school, designating areas in the classroom and in the cafeteria "peanut-safe" is reasonable and appropriate.**
- Inform parents of food allergy. When necessary, distribute letter from parent requesting community cooperation for providing allergen free snacks.

Nursing Services Responsibility

- Follow procedures outlined by APS Nursing Policy and Procedures Manual. **Annually**, review student Health Records and obtain Medical Authorization Form for Epi Pen &/or Benadryl, and Diet Prescription from physician, and Health History from family.
- Develop an individualized Allergy Action Emergency Plan (AAEP) for students with a documented life-threatening food allergy. Practice and implement AAEP as well as educate school staff about potential allergens, identifying reactions, treating reactions, and administering epinephrine (EpiPen) injections.
- Facilitate communication between school administration, teachers, cafeteria manager, food service nutrition coordinator/dietitian, staff members, bus transportation services, and family concerning changes or updates to student's condition or treatment plan.
- Send copies of signed Diet Prescription to the school's cafeteria manager and to the District Food and Nutrition Services-Special Needs Dietitian.

Food and Nutrition Services Responsibility

- During hours of food service operation, the cafeteria will make reasonable accommodations for children with life threatening allergies.
- Obtain copy of Diet Prescription Form signed by a licensed physician from APS School Nurse. Make modifications, under the direction of the Food & Nutrition Services dietitian, to meals and snacks according to the Diet Prescription Form. ***Modified snacks are only provided if the student is enrolled in an after school program that receives snacks from APS Food and Nutrition Services.***
- Read all food labels and recheck routinely for potential food allergens. Alert school to changes to products served.
- Ensure cafeteria supervisor and staff are trained in identifying and treating allergic reactions. Train all cafeteria staff about sound food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential food allergens.
- Follow strict procedures for cleaning and sanitizing all food preparations, serving, and eating areas to avoid cross-contamination.
- Maintain a monthly food allergy menu that highlights food products that may contain potential food allergens which can be accessed at the district website.

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Reference: The School Food Allergy Program, Edited by Anne-Munoz-Furlong. The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, 1995 www.foodallergy.org.