

We have students in this school who have severe allergies and are at risk of the life threatening condition anaphylaxis. We ask for your support in caring for these children.

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is life threatening as it often involves more than one body system (e.g. skin, respiratory system – causing swelling of the airways and preventing breathing, gastro-intestinal and cardiovascular). Peanuts, tree nuts, milk, egg, fish, shellfish, sesame, soy and wheat cause 90% of food allergic reactions in Australia, however any food containing protein can cause anaphylaxis in a susceptible individual. Other common causes of anaphylaxis include insect stings, medications, latex and exercise.

The number of children with severe food allergies is increasing. Some children have a single food allergen whilst others may have multiple food allergens. Schools are encouraged to implement several strategies to reduce the risk of an anaphylaxis occurring. The schools main risk minimisation strategies include:

- hand washing before and after eating
- appropriate food handling
- eating in a designated area at a specified time

Some schools will place restrictions on certain foods being brought into the school as well as foods sold through the school canteen. Depending on students specific requirements these restrictions may include several food groups. Each of these food groups should be treated with the same degree of risk. Food restrictions cannot guarantee the full elimination of all risk food groups within the school therefore it is important it does not create complacency and that the main risk minimisation strategies are adhered to.

Students can also assist by:

- encouraging the non-sharing or trading of food and drinks
- being aware and insightful of allergic student's high risk foods
- disposing of any packaging or uneaten food appropriately such as using bins or returning it to lunch boxes. This also assists students at risk of anaphylaxis from stings or bites by reducing the attraction of these insects.

One of the most beneficial way parents can help is by educating their non allergic children about allergies and encouraging them to wash hands after eating and to be responsible with their food. It is important to understand that even trace amounts of food can cause a life-threatening reaction if ingested. Preventative measures are extremely important and help to limit the dangers to students with allergies whilst they are slowly learning to care for themselves in the real world.

Children at risk of anaphylaxis carry an EpiPen (auto injector containing a pre measured dose of adrenaline) and Anaphylaxis Action Plan with them at all times. Teachers and staff have been trained in the management and emergency treatment of severe allergic reactions, which includes administration of an EpiPen before ambulance transport to hospital for further emergency care.

Your assistance and understanding are greatly appreciated. More information on anaphylaxis or the Be a M.A.T.E. (make allergy treatment easier) program can be obtained from www.allergyfacts.org.au or by enquiring at the school.

ALLERGY AWARE SCHOOL



Nuts, Egg, Dairy, Sesame, Soy, Seafood and Wheat are some foods that can cause anaphylaxis, even in small trace amounts. Your assistance with hygiene and handling food appropriately is appreciated.

Anaphylaxis is life threatening.

(Further details available at the office)