

Top Tips for Teachers

All school employees should be familiar with the type of foods that commonly cause food allergy, the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and the management of allergic reactions. Schools should:

- Develop an allergy and anaphylaxis management policy with information on what staff can do to provide a safer environment for children with food allergies.
- Provide allergy and anaphylaxis first aid training for staff that includes the use of adrenaline auto-injectors. This training should be updated on a regular basis.
- Identify children with allergies currently enrolled or due to be enrolled.
- Ensure that parents provide an emergency medical kit for their child that contains any medication required and an allergy action plan.
- Have an alert system for expiry dates of each child's adrenaline auto-injector to ensure that it is still in date.
- Ensure are easily accessible and that all staff know where these emergency medical kits are kept.
- Write an emergency response plan that describes exactly what to do and who to contact in the event that a child has an allergic reaction.

Some parents may not want their child's identity or allergies shared with the wider school community and some children with allergies may not want to be singled out or seen to be treated differently. Discuss with each child and their parents/guardians what they feel works best for them and whether they agree to have their child's name, photograph and relevant treatment details displayed in staff areas, canteens or other communal areas.

Bullying

Bullying is a problem that can affect all children and children with food allergies are no exception. Children may tease, taunt or try to trick them into eating a food or threaten them with the food they are allergic to.

If you are told about or discover this sort of behaviour, your school is likely to have general strategies in place for dealing with bullying situations and these should be followed. However you can also tailor your reaction to this specific situation as follows;

- Talk to the child performing the bullying and explain that an allergic reaction, especially anaphylaxis is extremely serious and possibly life threatening.
- Emphasise to the child that any behaviour or attempts to harm a child who has a food allergy with the allergen they are allergic to is treated as a serious and dangerous incident and managed accordingly.
- Remind the child about the ways children with food allergies can be helped.

Food Treats

Many teachers and childcare workers use food treats to reward children when they have achieved something or been especially well behaved. If you have a child with food allergies in your class/classroom, avoid using food treats where possible however if you do decide to use food treats, make sure that you offer treats that do not contain any of the allergens that children in your care are allergic to.

If you would like to hold an assembly or create a display using Allergy UK resources, contact our helpline on info@allergyuk.org or 01322 619898