

Food Allergies & Intolerances

Teacher Information

What is food allergy?

A food allergy leads to an immune reaction following contact with or consumption of a food. In severe food allergies even traces of the food can cause a life threatening reaction.

What are the most common food allergies?

Peanuts	Milk	Eggs	Wheat	Fish	Tree nuts	Shellfish	Soy
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For lists of mixed foods that may contain these allergens see:
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/foodallergies/allergies/Pages/default.aspx>

Mild to moderate food allergy symptoms:

- Hives, welts and itchy or red skin.
- Tingling around the mouth, swelling on lips and eyes.
- Gastrointestinal symptoms; cramps, diarrhea, and vomiting.
- Weakness, anxiety, distress and faintness.

Treatment of mild- moderate allergic reaction



Severe (Anaphylaxis) food allergy symptoms:

- Difficulty speaking, swallowing and breathing.
- Swelling of tongue, throat, difficulty breathing
- Wheezing or persistent cough
- Rapid drop in blood pressure, increased heart rate and loss of consciousness.
- Dizziness and faintness

Treatment of severe allergic reaction



What is food intolerance?

Food intolerance is the inability of an individual to digest or absorb a food. Food Intolerance leads to a body reaction but does not involve the immune system.

What are the most common food intolerances?

- **Lactose intolerance** – Caused by an inability to produce lactase, an enzyme which breaks down the milk sugar lactose.
- **Food additives** - Colours are the most common form of food additives causing intolerance.
- **Wheat intolerance** - Generally stems from gluten intolerance and inability to absorb and digest gluten protein.
- **Other natural food compounds** - Caffeine is the most common naturally occurring food irritant.

Food intolerance symptoms:

- Stomach upsets and bloating
- Skin rash
- Headaches and migraines
- Feeling unwell and runny nose

Management of food allergy and intolerance

- Avoid food irritant
- Read food label ingredient list to identify irritant ingredients and additives
- Seek medical advice to exclude other causes and confirm allergy or intolerance

Food allergy & intolerances in the classroom

Tasting new foods and handling foods and food packaging in classroom activities may trigger an otherwise undetected adverse student reaction. Reduce the risk with the following actions:

- Be aware of high risk students and avoid foods and packaging known to trigger reaction
- Communicate with all parents about planned food based activities
- Discuss common symptoms with students and need for immediate help seeking action
- Be aware of school policy, procedures and contacts related to anaphylaxis
- Seek regular training in the recognition, treatment and everyday management of those at risk of anaphylaxis

For more information visit relevant sites:

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia

- <http://www.foodallergyaware.com.au/about-us/>
- <https://www.allergyfacts.org.au/>

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

- <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/foodallergies/allergies/Pages/default.aspx>

Department of Health- Anaphylaxis Management Guidelines for WA Schools

- <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/anaphylaxis/docs/schools/11289%20SK13%20Guidelines.pdf>



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