



Food allergy occurs in around 5-10% of children and 2-4% of adults in Australia and New Zealand.

The most common triggers of food allergy are egg, cow's milk (diary), peanut, tree nuts, sesame, soy, wheat, fish and other seafood. However, almost any food can cause an allergic reaction, including fruit.

Allergic reactions to food range from mild to severe. Mild to moderate symptoms of food allergy include swelling of face, lips and/or eyes, hives or welts on the skin, stomach (abdominal) pain and vomiting.

Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) effect breathing and the heart and can therefore be life threatening. Most deaths due to anaphylaxis can be prevented by careful food allergen avoidance measures and immediate administration of an adrenaline (epinephrine) auto injector.

The most common foods that cause anaphylaxis are peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, milk and eggs. Most food allergies in children are not severe and may be outgrow with time. Peanut, tree nut, seed and seafood allergies tend to be lifelong.

Adverse reactions to foods that are not allergic reactions may include food intolerances, toxic reactions, food poisoning, enzyme deficiencies, food aversion or irritation from skin contact with certain foods. These adverse reactions are often mistaken for food allergy but do not cause anaphylaxis.

Christ Church Grammar School adheres to the Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) guidelines that recommend schools become 'allergy aware'. It is not possible to remove all potential allergic triggers from a school therefore our aim is to implement age appropriate and practical strategies.

CCGS is 'free' of no product. Such a guarantee cannot be given.

For more information visit www.allergy.org.au

As an 'allergy aware' school our aim is to inform staff, parents and boys about the risks of allergies, with a focus on food allergies and also to provide a supportive environment in which children at risk of anaphylaxis can feel safe.

The key to prevention of anaphylaxis is to identify allergens and prevent exposure to them. Below are some strategies based on guidelines produced by the ASCIA which will assist parents, boys and staff with risk minimisation.

Sharing food

- There should be no trading and sharing of food, food utensils and food containers.
- It is ideal that children with severe food allergies should only eat lunches and snacks that have been prepared at home.
- Bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes provided by the parents for their children should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for whom they are intended.
- Students eat in specified areas and it is not recommended that students with allergies be physically isolated from their peers.
- Parents are asked not to send high-risk foods to school.

The school canteen

- Inform canteen staff of student/s with allergies and the foods to which they are allergic.
- Implement a risk minimisation policy for the school's canteen. This involves removal of items with the relevant nut as an ingredient but does not apply to those foods labelled 'may contain traces of nuts'.
- Food preparation personnel (paid and voluntary) should be educated about measures necessary to prevent cross contamination during the handling, preparation and serving of food.

Class parties

- Plan ahead for special class activities or occasions such as excursions, in-school activities, sport days, camps and parties. Work with parents/guardians to provide appropriate food for the student.
- Inform other class members' parents of high-risk foods so that these foods are avoided.
- Foods should not be given to children with food allergy in primary school without the parents' permission

In the classroom

- Teachers should be asked to avoid bringing high-risk foods to school.
- Be aware of the possibility of hidden allergens in foods and of traces of allergens when using items such as egg or milk cartons in art or cooking classes.
- Avoid the use of food treats in class or as rewards, as these may contain hidden allergens. Non-food rewards are recommended.
- If food is purchased from the canteen it is recommended parents check the appropriateness of the foods by speaking to the canteen manager.

On camp

- If students with severe allergies are participating, then high-risk foods should not be taken or supplied.

General issues

- Encourage staff and students to wash their hands after eating.
- The students with severe allergies should wear a medic alert bracelet.
- There should be no sharing of wind instruments

References

- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA).
- Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia.

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