



It is not possible to remove all potential allergic triggers from a school therefore our aim is to implement age appropriate and practical strategies.

Food allergies are the most common trigger of allergic reaction outside of the home. One in twenty children have a food allergy, therefore with this in mind the focus of the following information is on food allergies.

The symptoms of food allergies range from mild to life threatening, with anaphylaxis being the most severe form of allergic reaction.

Nine foods cause 90 per cent of food-related allergic reactions: peanuts, tree nuts (hazelnuts, cashews, almonds), eggs, cow's milk, wheat, soybean, fish, shellfish and sesame.

Many children will 'outgrow' their food allergies, however, reactions to nuts, seeds and seafood tend to be lifelong.

### The problem with nuts...

1. Peanuts and tree nuts are amongst the most likely foods to cause anaphylaxis.
2. Nuts are hard to avoid due to their widespread use.
3. Only a small amount can trigger symptoms (in some cases only as much as the size of a sesame seed).
4. Of those who have died from anaphylaxis, 90% have been allergic to nuts with exposure being accidental and usually away from home (including school)

Christ Church Grammar School adheres to the Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) guidelines that recommend schools become '**allergy aware**'. Food bans are not advised due to difficulty implementing them and the lack of proven effectiveness.

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

For more information on food and nut allergies:

- **Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia. Phone: 1300 728 000. Website: [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)**
- **Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). Website: [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)**
- **Government of Western Australia, Department of Health. Website: [www.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.health.wa.gov.au)**

Food allergies are serious and although rare, at times can be fatal. 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.

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## 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.
- Classes have lunch in a specified area, which is a focus of supervision (it is not recommended that the allergic child be physically isolated from other children).
- **Ask parents 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. Work with parents/guardians to provide appropriate treats for the student.
- 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 (consistent with the risk minimisation policy in the canteen).

## 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). Food Allergy 2010 and Guidelines for Prevention of Food Anaphylactic Reactions in Schools, Preschools and Childcare
- Government of Western Australia, Department of Health: Anaphylaxis Management Guidelines for WA Schools 2010

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