



Tick Tock Training

FOOD ALLERGIES IN CHILDREN

It is your job to keep the children in your child care center safe. This means that you must protect them at all times from anything that could cause them harm. More and more these days this has come to include keeping them safe from foods that cause their bodies to have an allergic reaction.

Some common food allergies are:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts such as walnuts
- Soy (primarily in infants)
- Wheat (Gluten)

Food allergies generally develop early in life but can develop at any age. Children usually outgrow their egg, milk, and soy allergies, but people who develop allergies as adults usually have their allergies for life. Children generally do not outgrow their allergy to peanut.

Milk: Milk must be identified on food products in plain language, such as “contains milk” according to the Food Allergy Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) law. Some surprising sources of milk include non-dairy creamer, deli meats, hotdogs, canned tuna and many skin and hair care products.

Egg: Allergies to Egg is the second most common food allergy among children and most are diagnosed before the age of 2 years old.

Egg must be labeled on food labels in plain language, such as “contains egg,” according to FALCPA. Be aware of the hidden egg ingredients such as liquid egg substitutes and pasta. Egg may be present in immunizations such as the flu vaccine and the MMR vaccine. It may also be present in certain medications, like anesthesia medications.

Peanut: According to Jill Castle, Ms. Rd in her article “A Guide To Most Common Food Allergens” Approximately 1.6% of children and 0.6% of adults are allergic to peanut. There is evidence that the rate of peanut allergy is increasing and studies are ongoing in search of a cure for peanut allergy. Peanut allergy is a life-threatening allergy because rates of anaphylaxis are higher than that of milk, egg or wheat allergy. Only about 20% of children will outgrow their peanut allergy.

Peanuts grow underground (not in trees like tree nuts) and are part of the legume family, which also is home to soybeans, peas, lentils and beans. Having a peanut allergy does not mean you have a greater risk for allergy to beans and other legumes. It is estimated that 25-40% of people with a peanut allergy also have a tree nut allergy.

Peanuts in food products must be labeled according to FALCPA, in plain language on the package. Peanut butter is used in unlikely products like chili as a thickener, and in pet food. Peanut oil can be found in skin care products.

Tree Nuts: About 9% of children with a tree nut allergy will outgrow it. Tree nuts include a broad range of nuts, such as walnuts, pecans, pistachios, hazelnuts, almonds and more—essentially every nut that isn't a peanut. Due to the risk of cross-contact, individuals with tree nut allergy may also avoid peanuts. The risk of anaphylactic reaction to tree nuts is higher than that to milk, egg or wheat. It is possible to be allergic to one nut and not to others; or to be allergic to two types of tree nuts and not others. The recommendation is to avoid all tree nuts if you are allergic to one or any tree nut.

Tree nuts must be labeled on the ingredients label or food package in plain language, according to FALCPA. Tree nuts can be found in cereals, crackers, cookies, candy, chocolates and some cold cuts.

Soy: About 0.4% of children are allergic to soy; soy is not a major allergen for adults. Many children with a soy allergy will outgrow it by age 3, and most will outgrow it by age 10. Reactions to soy tend to be mild, however, although rare, severe reactions can occur. Children who are allergic to soy may also be allergic to milk. Individuals with a soy allergy must avoid all foods and non-food products containing and/or made with soy.

Soy must be labeled on food packages in plain language, for example, “contains soy,” according to FALCPA. Many foods contain soy so be sure to read the ingredients label.

Wheat: Approximately 20% of children who are allergic to wheat will be allergic to other grains, so check with their allergist to see if foods containing barley, rye or oats are okay to eat. Many kids will outgrow a wheat allergy by the age of 3 years. Celiac disease requires avoidance of gluten, which is found in wheat, rye, barley and contaminated oat products; many individuals with celiac disease follow a wheat-free diet but must also avoid other sources of gluten.

Wheat is the predominant grain in the American diet so it can be tricky to avoid. It is found in a variety of foods including breads, cereals, and crackers, as well as in unlikely foods like soy sauce, deli meats, ice cream and imitation crabmeat. Wheat can also be found in non-food items such as Play-Doh and glue. These items must also be completely avoided by children with this type of allergy.

THINGS TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR:

1. Skin Symptoms
 - a. Hives
 - b. Swelling
 - c. Skin Rash
2. Gastrointestinal Symptoms
 - a. Stomach Cramps
 - b. Nausea
 - c. Vomiting
 - d. Diarrhea
3. Respiratory Symptoms
 - a. Runny Nose
 - b. Difficulty Breathing
 - c. Tightening of the Throat
4. Oral Symptoms
 - a. Itching
 - b. Swelling
 - c. Hives in mouth or on tongue or roof of mouth
5. Systemic Symptoms
 - a. Rapid drop in blood pressure
 - b. Anaphylactic shock

Managing Food Allergies:

- A. Establish a written policy on parent/caregiver responsibilities – Parents must know what you will and will not feed their children and how you will respond to an allergy should one occur.
- B. Secure a physician's statement of food allergy and food restrictions – this is the law and will help staff know what to look for and how to respond.
- C. Train food preparation staff.
- D. Secure authorization to give medication if a life-threatening reaction occurs. Train staff to administer medications and how to use epi-pens and other auto-injectors.
- E. Seek professional advice for children with multiple food allergies.
- F. Be matter-of-fact about a child's food restrictions.
- G. Plan meals that everyone can eat.
- H. Read food labels.
- I. Make nutrient equivalent food substitutions. For example, apple juice is not a substitute for milk.

Remember that children generally hate being singled out. Become skilled at planning menus that everyone can eat. When you find that you must make substitutions for a child, be sure that what she gets is as nice as what everyone else is getting. Don't make it too spectacular, though, or you'll have everyone else clamoring for that special treatment!

Remember:

- (a) You must have written approval from a physician or a registered or licensed dietician in the child's records to serve a child a therapeutic or special diet. You must give this information to all employees preparing and serving food.
- (b) You must discuss recurring eating problems with the child's parent.
- (c) You may encourage but must not force children to eat.
- (d) You must not serve nutrient concentrates and supplements such as protein powders, liquid protein, vitamins, minerals, and other nonfood substances without written instructions from a physician.

For the menu:

- (1) Post daily menus showing all meals and snacks prepared and served by the child-care center where parents and others can see them.
- (2) Substitutions must be of comparable food value. Keep a record of any substitutions made.
- (3) Date menus and keep copies for review for three months.
- (4) If you rotate menus, keep a record of which menu was used for each date.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK:

Two children in your center have food allergies or intolerances.

Sue is allergic to peanuts. If she eats a food containing peanuts she breaks out in hives, wheezes and vomits.

Juan is lactose-intolerant and he cannot handle the sugar found in milk or milk products. If he does eat any food containing milk or milk products, Juan develops stomach cramps and diarrhea. Medical orders are on file instructing that Sue receive peanut-free foods and Juan be served milk-free meals. The order also directs that Juan have soy milk available to him at breakfast and lunch.

The regular lunch meal planned for today is:

Cheeseburger on a bun
Carrot sticks with ranch dressing dip
Tater tots
Apple slices with peanut butter
Choice of milk

Make any necessary changes to this meal so that it will be appropriate for Sue and Juan.

Meal substitutions for Sue – omit peanut butter

Meal substitutions for Juan – omit cheese on cheeseburger, offer soy milk and check ranch dressing label for milk or milk products.

Be sure procedures are in place to prevent cross-contamination. Peanut butter sticks to surfaces and can easily contaminate other foods if utensils and food contact surfaces are not properly cleaned and sanitized.

Remember, food allergies can be life threatening. Before the child attends your school meet with the parents/caregivers and discuss the dietary needs of their child. Be sure and take notes during this meeting. Remember, these are the people that have been successfully handling this food allergy and they have a wealth of knowledge to share with you on food substitutions. If you have any questions this is the time to find out the answer, not AFTER a child has had an allergic reaction. Below are some questions that you should ask all parents of a child with a food allergy.

1. What food is the child allergic too and have you had this confirmed with a physician?
2. What exactly happens in the child when they are exposed to this food?
How long does it take after contact for the reaction to occur?
What order do the symptoms usually occur in?
3. Does the child have the ability to tell us that he/she is having a reaction to a food?
4. Does the child know that they CAN NOT have specific foods?
5. Does the child WANT to eat the foods they are allergic to?
6. What is the exact procedure to follow if the child does come into contact with the allergen?

Let parents know that you will always call 911 at the start of what appears to be an allergic reaction and that they will be called second.

Assignment: Using the menu you currently use, (or a pre-school menu found online) pretend that you have 3 new students with allergies as stated below. Take all five days on the menu you choose and change them to meet the needs of the new students. Once you take your quiz you will be able to print off the certificate. This assignment must be attached to this certificate to make this training worth the 3 hours of training. Attach BOTH menu's to the certificate.

**CAROL- EGGS
DAVID – MILK
JOSEPH- PEANUTS**