Managing Food Allergies

Plan Ahead

- At enrollment, document all allergies (food, environmental, and medication).
- Make sure all children with food allergy conditions have medication and an emergency health care plan onsite at all times.
- Talk with parents/guardians and review all information prior to the child starting your program.
- Plan menus at least one week in advance, share with parents, and keep on file.
- Establish policies regarding food brought from home. (Child Development Homes must allow food from home.)
- Select appropriate and healthy food substitutions to meet children’s individual needs.

Keep Children Safe

- Remind children with food allergies to ask before they eat, “Is this safe for me?”
- Don’t allow children to trade meals and snacks.
- Confine food to eating areas.
- Don’t allow children to tease or wave food in faces.
- Wash hands and meal/snack surfaces before and after eating.

Choose Carefully

- Read ALL food labels every time.
- Keep food simple. Allergens often hide in prepared ingredients such as soups, crackers, cookies.
- Check labels on all art, craft, lotions, sunscreen and pet food items; allergens hide here too!
- Avoid art projects that involve food.
- Replace candy treats with fruit or non food items.
- Consider food options and safety issues for field trips, holidays, special occasions, and emergency kits.

Reduce Cross Contamination

- Use separate utensils, cutting boards, and pans for different foods.
- Never use the same cooking oil to cook more than one food item.
- Wash all food preparation items in warm, soapy water.
- Always use appropriate handwashing after handling a food item. Hand sanitizers do not remove food allergens from your hands.
- Clean all countertops after use.

The Top 8 Common Food Allergies

Soy
Grain
Tree Nuts
Shell Fish
Peanuts
Fish
Eggs
Milk

Remind children to ask before they eat “Is this safe for me?”
Just a tiny trace amount can cause a reaction.

DON'T HESITATE—TAKE ACTION!

• Be prepared and alert: First signs of a food allergy may occur when a child is in your care.

• Immediately give medication to stop reaction.

• Document any concerns and report to parents and health care provider.

Mouth and throat swelling

Wheezing and difficulty breathing

Weakness, rapid heart rate, and anxiety

Itchy hives and general body redness (anywhere on body)

Symptoms can appear in a few seconds or show up hours later.

ASK AND KNOW

What does the diet modification request say?

What does the health care plan say?

Where are medications stored?

Who administers medications?

Who will call 911?

Who accompanies child to the ER?

How do I contact parents?

Where do I record and report?

WHAT A CHILD MIGHT DO

Pull tongue

Hold throat

Put hand in mouth to scratch.

Voice may change or sound hoarse.

WHAT A CHILD MIGHT SAY

“My tongue is hot.”

“My mouth is tingling.”

“My tongue itches.”

“There is something stuck in my throat.”

“My lips feel thick.”

Essentials Child Care Preservice Program is a multi-agency collaborative effort and is funded by Iowa Department of Human Services.

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HS 770 | May 2017