

## SEVERE ALLERGIES AND THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

Allergic disease is a common illness of childhood and includes asthma, hay fever, food, insect sting, skin allergies, or contact allergies (i.e.: poison ivy or latex). None of these reactions can be transmitted from the allergic child to others. However, some allergies may be life threatening.

It is important to know the most common foods which cause severe allergic reactions: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, soy, eggs, wheat, fish and shellfish. Call 911 if dangerous symptoms like tingling, itching, swelling of the mouth or throat, difficulty breathing, diarrhea and vomiting, or loss of consciousness occur.

Children can be stung or bitten by a variety of insects including honey bees, yellow jackets, wasps, hornets, deer flies, etc. Reactions to the sting can be local and mild such as: pain, swelling, redness, or itching that can last up to a few days. Severe reactions can occur within minutes or hours and may include progressive symptoms of weakness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, tightness in the chest, difficulty swallowing or breathing, and/or loss of consciousness. This can become a life threatening situation, which requires a call to 911.

If your child has any of the above symptoms, it is important to get medical care for your child. If your child is severely allergic to any substance or food, avoidance of that substance or food is necessary and school personnel need to be notified of the child's allergy. If your child needs medication for an allergic reaction in school, the parent or guardian must fill out forms at the school.

It is important to communicate openly with the school about your child's severe allergy. This will help the school to prepare a plan of action specific to your child's needs.



Source: *The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network 1-800-929-4040*

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