

Food and Stinging Insect Allergy Guidelines

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) is committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for students. BCHD is working in cooperation with school administration, staff, parents, and docents to reduce the risk of accidental exposures to food related and stinging insect allergens in the school setting. BCHD has prepared Food Allergy Guidelines to safeguard students from allergies during the delivery of BCHD programs and services.

Goals:

- Ensure safe delivery of health education programs in the schools.
- Support participating schools' allergy protocols and allergy prevention measures.
- Provide parent education about food allergy awareness and prevention through trainings and docent communication.
- Train docents to deliver nutrition and garden lessons confidently with allergy safety precautions.

Background:

Food Allergies

A food allergy is an immune system reaction that occurs soon after ingestion of a certain food. Food allergies affect an estimated 4-6% of children in the United States. Although nearly any food is capable of causing an allergic reaction, the most common foods that cause 90 percent of all food-allergic reactions in the United States are peanuts, tree nuts, milk, egg, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish.

Food related allergic reactions can span a wide range of symptoms in type and severity, from skin symptoms and digestive problems to anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis can be life-threatening and is considered the most serious type of allergic reaction. Although anyone who has a food allergy can experience anaphylaxis, the foods most likely to cause this type of severe reaction are peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish.

Insect Sting Allergies

In stinging insect allergy, the allergen is venom from a sting. Most serious reactions are caused by five types of insects:

- Yellow jackets are black with yellow markings, found in various climates. Their nests are usually located underground, but sometimes found in the walls of buildings, cracks in masonry or in woodpiles.
- Honeybees have round, fuzzy bodies with dark brown and yellow markings. They can be found in honeycombs in trees, old tires or other partially protected sites.
- Paper wasps are slender with black, brown, red and yellow markings. They live in a circular comb under eaves, behind shutters or in shrubs and woodpiles.
- Hornets are black or brown with white, orange or yellow markings. Their nests are gray or brown and are usually found in trees.
- Fire ants are reddish-brown ants living in large mounds, mostly in warmer climates. They attack with little warning, inserting highly concentrated toxins that cause burning and pain.

BCHD has developed and implemented two school-based programs - Live Well Kids and LiveWell Tots - that include food sampling. Food sampling may expose students to food allergens, increasing the risk of food related allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis. A key California Nutrition Education Competency (1g) is to know principles of handling foods for optimal food quality and safety. BCHD's Food Allergy Guidelines have been developed to ensure that BCHD staff, interns and volunteers (docents) are competent in procedures essential for food safety.

Food Allergy Symptoms in Children

Children with food or stinging insect allergies might communicate their symptoms in the following ways:

- It feels like something is poking my tongue.
- My tongue (or mouth) is tingling (or burning).
- My tongue (or mouth) itches.
- My tongue feels like there is hair on it.
- My mouth feels funny.
- There's a frog in my throat; there's something stuck in my throat.
- My tongue feels full (or heavy).
- My lips feel tight.
- It feels like there are bugs in my ears.
- It (my throat) feels thick.
- It feels like a bump is on the back of my tongue (throat).

Source: The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network. Food Allergy News. 2003;13(2).

Allergy Prevention and Preparedness

BCHD will utilize the ACT (Avoid, Communicate, and Teach) and REAct models for prevention and preparedness.

Avoid

BCHD Responsibilities

- Request that our vendors provide food samples that exclude nuts and tree nuts. **Please note: This does not guarantee that food items are not in a facility where nuts are present.**
- Each time an order is placed with a vendor, advise them that sample products are to be nut free.

Docent Responsibilities

- **Do not use peanuts or any food containing peanuts, peanut butter or peanut oil during the LiveWell Kids lesson. This does not guarantee that food items are not in a facility where nuts are present.**
- Review the food allergy list prior to food sample preparation.
- Confirm known food allergies with teacher prior to each lesson delivery.
- Review food labels carefully. Pay extra attention to foods that contain multiple ingredients.
- Omit the allergenic foods for students with known allergies.
- When there is a food item that may cause an allergy to a child, if appropriate, have the teacher request parents to provide a suggested food substitute listed in the food sampling instruction sheet.

- Practice safe food handling and safety guidelines that are outlined in the LiveWell Kids Nutrition Training.
- Never force a child to try a food. It is important to respect the needs and rights of each student.
- If a reaction occurs, notify the teacher immediately and after the child is cared for notify the school Lead Docent and the LiveWell Garden Education Coordinator immediately.

Communicate

BCHD Responsibilities

- Maintain an active list of known food allergies from all partnering schools. This will be carried out in accordance to student confidentiality regulations.
- Instruct lead docents to ensure all docents are aware of their classroom allergies.
- Maintain knowledge of foods that contain the eight most common food allergens.
- Provide food sample instruction sheet handouts in each lesson and identify the eight most common food allergens.

Lead Docent Responsibilities

- Maintain an active list of known food allergies for all classes.
- Present and reinforce food allergy protocol to all docents.
- Follow all the responsibilities outlined for docents.

Teach

1. In every training, BCHD staff will instruct and reinforce food allergy prevention and preparedness in the following ways:
 - Remind docents to always check with the teacher for potential allergies prior to each lesson.
 - Instruct docents to double check the ingredients of food samples for potential allergies.
 - Follow the allergic response protocol (see below) in the event the docent finds a potential allergen in the food sample.
2. Docents are encouraged to watch this six minute video titled "Practical Food Allergy Management: Preparedness" <http://www.allergyhome.org/practical-food-allergy-management-prevention/> prior to delivering their first lesson.
 - a. Docents are also encouraged to review the Food Allergy Awareness Quiz to learn more about food allergy awareness and to review some skills that are important for managing food allergies. Please note: docents are not expected to administer epinephrine in the treatment of anaphylaxis. The classroom teacher will take the lead in the case of an allergic reaction. The docent should be able to recognize when a reaction is occurring and understand the use of epinephrine.

Preparedness

BCHD staff and docents will be able to:

1. Recognize anaphylaxis;
2. Understand the use of epinephrine in the treatment of anaphylaxis, and;
3. Activate allergic response protocol.

Emergency Response

Symptoms vary greatly. Food-related allergic reactions can be mild or severe. In an incident of an allergic reaction or if there is a suspicion of a reaction, please notify the teacher immediately. Teachers should have directions on how to manage and/or treat a child's existing condition through an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) that was completed by the child's parent or guardian. The teacher will take action consistent with their school's Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan (FAMPP) OR "all-hazards" emergency response protocol. The teacher may contact the school office for assistance or **call 911**. Docents are advised seek guidance and help from the teacher regarding emergency response to an allergy reaction.

Allergic Response Protocol

In the case of an allergic reaction, the docent shall do the following:

- Immediately contact the classroom teacher and defer to the teacher for school protocol.
- Remove food sample from child and review ingredients to try and determine cause of allergic reaction.
- Contact the school lead docent and advise of allergic reaction and actions taken.
- Contact Mishell Balzer, Garden Education Coordinator at BCHD (mishell.balzer@bchd.org, 310-374-3426 ext. 264) to report of allergic reaction and actions taken.
- Garden Education Coordinator will complete incident report and submit to Human Resources within one business day.
 - Garden Education Coordinator will notify the Director of Youth Services, Director of Lifespans and Chief Medical Advisor of incident and schedule time to develop and review corrective action plan.

Insect Sting First Aid

If a child is stung by a bee, wasp or hornet:

- Have someone stay with the child to be sure that they do not have an allergic reaction.
- Contact the teacher immediately to follow the school allergy protocol.
- If the child is showing signs of a server allergic reaction, follow the school allergy protocol and do not hesitate to call 911.
- Wash the site with soap and water.
- Remove the stinger using gauze wiped over the area or by scraping a fingernail over the area.
Never squeeze the stinger or use tweezers.
- Apply ice to reduce swelling
- Do not scratch the sting as this may increase swelling, itching, and risk of infection.

For questions or comments, please contact Mishell Balzer at mishell.balzer@bchd.org or at 310-374-3426 ext. 264.