



Allergy Management Guidance for Schools

The presence of allergies and the potential for a severe allergic reaction among our students is a significant health and safety concern. An allergy is the body's immune system overreaction to a normally harmless or mild substance. The substances that trigger an allergic reaction are called allergens. Anaphylaxis is a severe form of allergic reaction to a food or non-food allergen that involves all body systems and can be life-threatening. The top eight food allergens are milk, egg, peanut, tree nut, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Non-food allergens include medications, latex, insect bites and stings, and environmental allergens like mold, pollen and pet dander. Peanuts, tree nuts and insect stings are the most common allergens that cause anaphylaxis, but any allergic reaction can become severe. In regards to allergies we know that:

Allergy prevalence is growing

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported a significant increase in allergies among children over the last two decades
- Medical procedures to treat anaphylaxis resulting from food allergies increased 377% between 2007-2016
- In the U.S. 8% of children have food allergies, which equates to 1 in 13 children, roughly 2 children in every classroom

Allergies can negatively impact health

- 42% of children with a known food allergy have been treated in the emergency room for a severe allergic reaction
- Teenagers and young adults with food allergies are at the highest risk for developing fatal anaphylaxis

Allergic events can happen in the school setting

- More than 15% of school-aged children with known food allergies have had a reaction while at school
- 25% of students treated at school for a severe allergic reaction, have not been previously diagnosed
- The CDC does not endorse the banning of certain food allergens across a whole school or Early Childhood Education program, stating that "such an option cannot guarantee a totally safe environment because there is no reasonable or fail-safe way to prevent an allergen from inadvertently entering into a building" (*Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools and Early Care and Education Programs*, 2013, p.39)

It is more important than ever for our school communities to have an allergy management plan in place. Student safety is our top priority, and we seek to accomplish this through the following three objectives: **allergy awareness education**, **student allergen avoidance** and **emergency preparedness**. The collaboration of a multidisciplinary team is necessary and includes health care providers, parents, School Administration, the School Nurse and Health Aide, Nutrition Services staff, Transportation staff, educators and support staff, along with the students themselves. Outlined below are the responsibilities and contributions of key team members.

Parents

- Parents will notify the School Nurse, Health Aide and/or early childhood education staff of their student's allergies at the beginning of each school year and with updates
- Parents will provide a signed copy of the [Colorado Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan and Medication Orders](#) (hereafter referred to as the Allergy Care Plan) at the beginning of each school year or at the time of diagnosis
- Parents will provide the appropriate medication(s) ordered in the Allergy Care Plan (non-expired, with original pharmacy label or over the counter packaging), to be stored in the Health Office and utilized by trained and delegated staff
- Parents will work with their student to understand the implications of their allergy, develop strategies for avoiding exposure and increasing self advocacy
- Parents may decide to provide safe food items from home for all meal times, celebrations involving food, special school events and field trips
- Parents may also assist their student in making appropriate school lunch food choices by utilizing the [Nutrislice](#) menu application, which identifies the major food allergens contained in each menu item
- If meal accommodations are needed beyond the menu options available, parents will coordinate with Nutrition Services (see below for more information)
- Parents will notify extracurricular or club sponsors of the student's allergies and coordinate care with their contact (the school Allergy Care Plan and emergency medications will not be accessible to them)

School Administration

- School Administration will support and direct the development of a school-based allergy management plan in alignment with this guidance document
- Prioritize opportunities for staff training in allergy awareness and emergency preparedness by the School Nurse, on an annual and ongoing basis
- Designate the school Section 504 Coordinator and authorize them to create individualized student accommodations as appropriate and agreed upon by team
- School administrators who receive reports of allergy related bullying will ensure the incident is promptly investigated and addressed

Health Services

- The School Nurse and Health Aide, will collect and update student allergy information received through the Online Registration process, and individual parent communication
- The School Nurse and Health Aide, will process and maintain each Allergy Care Plan and student emergency medication in a secure and unlocked location in the Health Office and document health conditions and events in Infinite Campus
- The School Nurse and Health Aide will notify appropriate staff of students with identified life threatening allergies at the beginning of each school year and with updates
- The School Nurse will facilitate staff training and discern which staff will be considered Allergy Aware: informed of major allergens, understand best practices for allergen avoidance, quickly recognize the signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction, and activate the emergency response sequence, and which staff will be

Emergency Prepared: in addition to above, know the specific allergen(s) of individual students and be trained and delegated to administer an epinephrine auto-injector and/or other medications prescribed in the Allergy Care Plan

- The School Nurse will ensure there is Emergency Prepared staff in attendance on all field trips, provided with a copy of the Allergy Care Plan and prescribed medications
- If an allergy incident occurs, the School Nurse will debrief with staff and parents to process the event and look for opportunities to improve school safety
- In the event of a severe allergic reaction and/or epinephrine use at school, the School Nurse will submit an [Epinephrine/Anaphylaxis Reports](#) form to the Colorado Department of Education Health and Wellness Unit

Nutrition Services

- Nutrition Services staff are trained in food safety, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and sanitation procedures according to county, state and federal regulations. Additionally, kitchen managers and assistant managers hold a Certified Food Protection Manager Certificate in Servsafe
- Nutrition Services is “peanut and tree nut cautious” in grades P-8, meaning that foods served do not contain peanuts or tree nuts. However, some food items served may have the manufacturer precautionary label “made in a facility or on equipment that processes peanuts or tree nuts”
- In grades 9-12, peanut and tree nut containing foods are served, and indicated as such in the [Nutrislice](#) menu application
- If the student’s dietary restrictions rise to the level of a dietary disability, the Nutrition Services [Special Dietary Needs Procedure](#) will be enacted, which includes the completion of a [Medical Statement for Meal Modification](#) form signed by a health care provider, along with a consultation with the Special Diets Coordinator

Classroom Teachers

- Teachers will review the list of students with identified allergies provided to them at the beginning of each school year and with updates (this information is kept confidential per FERPA guidelines and is maintained in the substitute folder)
- Teachers will be trained to be Allergy Aware, and some will be delegated to be Emergency Prepared, based on their role and the students in their care
- Teachers will give advance notice to the School Nurse of upcoming class field trips so that appropriate preparations can be made
- Teachers will strive to create a safe and inclusive environment for their students with allergies by avoiding the use of identified allergens in all class projects, art and crafts, and teacher provided rewards and incentives
- Teachers will coordinate with parents when planning class parties or celebrations that include food, by either eliminating or substituting allergen containing foods
- Teachers will reinforce and monitor that there is no student sharing of food, classroom cleaning protocols are followed, and that students are ideally washing hands with soap and water or using hand wipes, before and after handling and consuming food (hand sanitizer alone does not remove food proteins)

- Teachers will take appropriate action to stop any reported or witnessed incidence of allergy related bullying or intimidation, and report it to the school administration

Students

- Students with allergies can expect to participate in all school activities with parental coordination and staff support
- Students with allergies are encouraged to advocate for themselves in the school setting
- Students with allergies may carry and self-administer emergency medication if agreed upon by their parent, health care provider, and the School Nurse, as outlined in the [Parent/Legal Guardian's Release for Student to Carry and Self-Administer an Epi-Pen at School](#) form
- Students with allergies will refrain from accepting or sharing food with other students
- Students will report any incidents of allergy related bullying to school personnel
- Students will notify school personnel immediately of any known or possible allergen exposure and/or the development of allergy symptoms

Section 504 Coordinator

- Consider high risk students (those with previous anaphylactic reactions, asthma, young age or developmental delay) for a Section 504 evaluation
- A parent or other team member can request a Section 504 evaluation using the [Section 504 referral form](#)
- If a student is deemed eligible, accommodations may include: a precautionary sign on the classroom door, a letter to parents requesting they refrain from sending specific allergen(s) into the classroom, parent/teacher coordination that involves elimination or substitution of allergen from classroom based celebrations and events, preferential seating, additional cleaning procedures, class allergy awareness training, and other reasonable requests agreed upon by team

Cafeteria Staff

- Nutrition Services, Lunchroom Monitors and custodial staff work together to ensure cafeteria tables are cleaned per protocol in between each grade level lunch rotation
- At the elementary level, a table can be designated “allergy-friendly” and students with identified allergens (often peanut and tree nut allergies) may sit there according to parent preference, and may invite a friend with an allergen safe meal to join them
- Lunchroom Monitors will reinforce with students and monitor that there is no sharing of food or teasing/bullying surrounding food items
- Approved allergy and food safety educational posters can be placed in the kitchen and lunchroom

Custodial Staff

- Maintain daily surveillance of school grounds, monitoring for bee, hornet or other insect infestations, remove hives and eliminate conditions that attract insects
- All vacuums contain HEPA filters to prevent the spread of airborne contaminants. These filters trap most bacteria, pathogens, microbial spores and tracked-in soil particles

- In addition to the building HVAC filtration system, and increased fresh air exchange ventilation, each learning space and cafeteria is equipped with an air purification unit that filters bacteria, dust, pollen, smoke, mold spores and pet dander

BASE (Before and After School Enrichment) and Extracurricular Activities

- BASE Programs will collect health information from parents for each student enrolled according to the Colorado Department of Human Services Licensing rules and regulations. Orders, medications and allergy care will be overseen by the Children's Hospital BASE Nurse Consultant
- Club and Extracurricular sponsors will gather student health information as part of their application process, and work with parents and students to ensure participant safety

Transportation

- Staff will have access to student health information in Infinite Campus
- In normal circumstances, no food is to be passed out, shared or eaten on the bus
- Staff are trained to recognize an allergic reaction, safely stop transport, and activate the emergency response system

This document aligns with the following Adams 12 District Policies

- Students with Food Allergies ([5415](#))
- Medication Administration ([5420](#))
- Nutrition Services Operations ([3700](#))
- Student Bullying, Harassment, Hazing, Intimidation ([5110](#))
- Field Trips and Activity Travel ([6270](#))

For more support, consult with your School Nurse or contact Sarah Pentzer, Health Services Coordinator, at 720-972-7107

This document was revised March, 2021 by:

Julie McRae, Ed.S, Health Services/504 Coordinator

Maurene Beamer, RD, SNS, Nutrition Supervisor

Nancy Mitchell, BSN, RN, School Nurse

Kelly Gall, BSN, RN, Early Childhood Education School Nurse

References

- Allergy Safe Kids. (n.d.). *Food Allergy Training School Staff Module*. ASK. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.allergysafekids.org/school-staff-module.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.-a). *Food Allergies*. CDC Healthy Schools. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/index.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.-b). *MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS Select Resources*. CDC Healthy Schools. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/pdf/20_316712-E_FA_resources_508tagged.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). *Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools and Early Care and Education Programs*. CDC Healthy Schools. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/pdf/20_316712-A_FA_guide_508tag.pdf
- Code of Colorado Regulations. (2014, January). *RULES FOR STUDENT POSSESSION AND ADMINISTRATION OF ASTHMA, ALLERGY AND ANAPHYLAXIS MANAGEMENT MEDICATIONS OR OTHER PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS* (1 CCR 301-68). <https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/GenerateRulePdf.do?ruleVersionId=5567>
- Code of Colorado Regulations. (2019, March). *RULES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS* (1 CCR 301-68). <https://www.cde.state.co.us/healthandwellness/2019-rules-for-administration-of-medications-1-ccr-301-68>
- COLORADO Department of Education. (2021, March 10). *School Nursing and Health-Health Conditions & Care Plans*. CDE. https://www.cde.state.co.us/healthandwellness/snh_healthissues#allergy
- Food Allergy Research & Education. (n.d.-a). *Facts and Statistics*. FARE. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/facts-and-statistics>
- Food Allergy Research & Education. (n.d.-b). *Food Allergies in the Classroom*. FARE. <https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/food-allergies-classroom>
- National Association of School Nurses. (n.d.). *Allergies and Anaphylaxis*. NASN. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.nasn.org/nasn/nasn-resources/practice-topics/allergies-anaphylaxis>