

# FOOD ALLERGY FACT SHEET

## Managing Food Allergies: School Nutrition Staff

### 1. Know your district or school food allergy policy.

- Read your district or school food allergy policy.
- Understand your role in keeping students with food allergies safe.
- Know how to activate the school's emergency action plan if a student has an allergic reaction.

### 2. Be familiar with each student's medical statement and Food Allergy Action Plan.

- Follow the instructions in the student's medical statement.
- Understand each student's Food Allergy Action Plan/Emergency Care Plan and keep in a place that is easy to find.
- Seek clarification if the medical statement is not clear. Ask your manager or director to contact the parent/guardian, if necessary. Do not serve a child with a food allergy any food that is suspected to possibly contain or have come in contact with an allergen.
- Know your school's system to identify students who have food allergies.
- Keep all student information confidential.

### 3. Read ingredient labels to check for allergens (foods that can cause allergic reactions).

- Most ingredient labels list the major eight foods causing allergic reactions using their common name (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and crustacean shellfish).
- Check labels for warning statements such as "may contain," "produced on shared equipment," or "produced in a plant that uses." These foods should not be served to students with food allergies.
- Check labels for allergens on every product each time the product is purchased and received. Contact the manufacturer if the label is unclear.
- Maintain labels for a minimum of 24 hours after the food is served.

### 4. Avoid cross-contact when preparing and serving food.

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after each task. Using water alone or hand sanitizer alone does not remove allergens.
- Thoroughly wash, rinse, and sanitize all cookware before and after each use when preparing allergen-free foods. Warm, soapy water and friction are the only effective way to remove allergens.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces before use.
- Designate an allergen-free zone in the kitchen. When working with multiple food allergies, set up procedures to prevent cross-contact.
- Follow standardized recipes exactly as written.
- Use serving utensils and gloves designated for allergen-free foods.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize tables and chairs before and after each meal and as needed.



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## References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). *Voluntary guidelines for managing food allergies in schools and early care and education programs*. [www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/)
- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2020). *Food allergies for school nutrition managers and staff*.  
<https://theicn.org/food-safety>
- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2016). *Serving safe food to students with food allergies sample SOP*. <https://theicn.org/food-safety>
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2018). *Food allergen labeling and consumer protection act of 2004 (FALCPA)*.  
<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/Allergens/ucm106187.htm>
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2018). *What you need to know about food allergies sample SOP*.  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/what-you-need-know-about-food-allergies>

## For More Information

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology  
<http://www.aaaai.org>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/>
- Food Allergy Research & Education  
<http://www.foodallergy.org>
- Food Insight (website sponsored by International Food Information Council Foundation)  
<http://www.foodinsight.org>
- Institute of Child Nutrition  
<http://www.theicn.org/foodsafety>
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases  
<http://www.niaid.nih.gov>
- National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education  
<http://nrckids.org>
- School Nutrition Association  
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety/food-safety-resources>
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
*Food Allergens*  
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/Food-Allergens/default.htm>
- USDA National Agricultural Library  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov>

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