

Ten Strategies to Help Reduce the Risk of Severe Allergic Reactions

Even tiny or trace amounts of a food allergens can trigger a severe allergic reaction. Avoiding allergy triggers is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction.

Awareness and support from others in a community can help create safer environments for those at risk.

Allergy Safe Communities has created the following guidelines to help students reduce their risk of exposure to food allergies:

1. Wash hands and mouth before and after eating.
2. Take precautions to minimize the risk of cross-contamination in food preparation.
3. Read food labels and ask food allergic individuals about their specific needs.
4. Ensure that children do not share food with food-allergic friends or pressure them into accepting a food they do not want.
5. Properly clean surfaces and toys, and dispose of food items after meals and snacks.
6. Provide adult supervision of young children when they are eating or when there is food around.
7. Ensure that ingredients of food brought in for special events, served in school cafeterias, or provided by catering companies are clearly identified.
8. Consider modifying or restricting the use of food in class activities, depending on the allergies of the children.
9. Consult parents of food-allergic children when food is involved in class activities.
10. Implement a "no eating" rule during daily travel on school buses.

In spite of the best efforts, accidents and cross contamination happens. That's why it's vital for students with severe food allergies to always have an epinephrine auto-injector within reach. Teachers and school staff should know how to use their student's auto-injector in the event of an allergic emergency.

For more information about severe allergies in school, visit EpiPen.ca.