

## HOW BERRI PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGES FOOD ANAPHYLAXIS

- The key to anaphylaxis prevention is avoidance of the known trigger(s).
- Children with food anaphylaxis require special precautions to avoid exposure to food triggers.

We currently have a student in the school who has a severe anaphylactic reaction to nuts. Our school requests that families use restraint in regard to sending nuts and nut products to school.

### **How can you tell if a product contains nuts?**

Look at the list of the **main ingredients** on products. This will state whether a product **actually** contains nuts.

### **Examples of products include:**

- Peanut paste
- Nutella
- Muesli bars with nuts
- Chocolate bars with nuts e.g. Snickers bars

**The words “May contain traces of nuts” appears on almost all products these days!** This is because many different products are processed in the same factory outlet and the manufacturer warns that products **may** be contaminated with nuts, these items are not as significant as products with nuts, therefore acceptable for children to bring and eat.

### **What happens if my child brings a nut product to school?**

#### ➤ **In the class with the anaphylactic student:**

- The child is **NOT** punished – the child eats separately because they have brought something with nuts and encouraged to wash hands afterwards.

**Please note that children have been really supportive of managing anaphylaxis in the classroom.**

#### ➤ **In other classes:**

- The child tells the teacher
- The child eats the food in the classroom
- After eating children are encouraged to wash hands and dispose of any wrappers in the bin.

### **What is anaphylaxis and how common is it?**

Allergic reactions are common and occur to many substances (triggers) in our environment. Most reactions produce symptoms, which are mild and although bothersome are seldom serious. The most severe and sudden form of allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis occurs soon after exposure to a trigger and importantly these reactions can be serious and even life threatening. Approximately 1 in every 200 children will experience an anaphylactic reaction at some time.

### **What are the triggers of anaphylaxis?**

Virtually any substance can trigger anaphylaxis in susceptible individuals. The common triggers of anaphylaxis include the following:

#### ❖ **Food**

Usually cows milk, nuts, eggs, fish or shell fish but can include any food and some additives such as preservatives (eg metabisulphite)

#### ❖ **Insect venom**

Usually bee, wasp or jumper ant venom

#### ❖ **Medication**

Usually prescribed medication but can be due to herbal or natural products.

Food is often the trigger in pre-school age children while insect venom and medication is the trigger in school age children. Occasionally the trigger for anaphylaxis cannot be identified despite further investigations.

### **Can anaphylaxis be prevented?**

If the trigger is known anaphylaxis can usually be prevented. However, accidental exposure to triggers can still occur despite all precautions and in a small number of children the trigger may not have been identified. The child and all caregivers need to be educated on how to avoid specific triggers.



### **How can an anaphylactic reaction be recognised?**

Common symptoms include the following:

#### ❖ **Skin**

A red, raised and itchy rash  
Swelling of the face and/or body

#### ❖ **Breathing**

Persistent cough  
Noisy breathing  
Hoarse voice  
Difficulty talking or swallowing  
Struggling for breath  
Blue tongue and lips

#### ❖ **Bowel**

Stomach Cramps  
Urge to pass stool

#### ❖ **Heart**

Fast pulse  
Limb pulses not felt  
Collapse with loss of conscious

Most children who are having an anaphylactic reaction will experience more than one symptom eg skin rash with cough. The most dangerous reactions involve breathing and the heart.

Berri Primary School staff have been trained in managing an anaphylactic reaction.

**Thank you for your support in helping us to manage the food allergy situation with our efforts to provide a nut free environment.**

## BERRI PRIMARY SCHOOL

### **With acknowledgments to:**

- South Australian Women's and Children's Hospital Adelaide
- Department of Education and Children's Services