

ANAPHYLAXIS MANAGEMENT (FOOD)

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 occasionally have students in the school who have severe anaphylactic reactions 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 butter, Nutella, Muesli bars with nuts

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

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.