

FOOD ALLERGIES

A food allergy is when the body mistakenly reacts to a certain food or ingredient as if it were harmful. The food or ingredient that causes the reaction is called an allergen.

Symptoms can happen within a few minutes or up to a few hours of the allergen being eaten and can be seen or felt in different parts of the body. Symptoms may include (but are not limited to):

- Skin rash or eczema;
- Swelling of the tongue or throat and difficulty breathing;
- Itching in the mouth and throat, cramps, nausea, diarrhea, and/or vomiting;
- Drop in blood pressure and loss of consciousness;

Anaphylaxis is a serious reaction that happens quickly. Anaphylaxis can involve many different parts of the body. The most severe symptoms can restrict breathing and blood circulation and may cause death.

Allergic reactions should be treated according to the student's food allergy action plan. Antihistamines and other medicines can be used. In severe cases, the medicine epinephrine (epi-pen or similar) should be given as soon as possible. Always call 911.

The most common foods that cause allergic reactions include:

- **Milk**
- **Tree nuts**
- **Fish**
- **Eggs**
- **Wheat**
- **Shellfish**
- **Peanuts**
- **Soy**
- **Sesame seeds**

The best way to avoid a reaction is to avoid the food that causes the allergy. Develop a system for checking ingredient labels carefully and have a plan to limit the ways in which the child could have contact with allergens, including airborne. If a breakfast food containing a potential allergen is served, strive to avoid cross-contamination. Cross-contamination happens when a food containing an allergen comes in contact with a food or surface that does not contain an allergen.

The breakfast program menu may need to be adapted to include foods that are acceptable for all students. For specific allergy information please consult with your local public health nurse and Breakfast Club of Canada Regional Coordinator.

**IT'S VERY
IMPORTANT TO
FOLLOW THE
SCHOOL'S FOOD
ALLERGEN
POLICY
CLOSELY**