

# FOOD ALLERGIES AT SCHOOL: A PARENT/GUARDIAN GUIDE

Below you will find answers to some frequently asked questions that may be of help when thinking about food allergies and school.

## 1. What steps can I take before the start of school?

- a. Meet with school staff (Nurse, Teacher, perhaps Principal) to discuss your child's allergy.
- b. Provide food allergy treatment plan from your child's health care provider (Same as "[Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan](#)").
- c. Complete the [Sting/Food Allergy Health History Form](#). Also, it is often helpful to have a signed release allowing the school nurse to communicate with your child's health care provider.
- d. Provide emergency medications to the school health office. Be sure prescriptions have the pharmacy label on them. Over the counter medications must be in the original packaging, and include instructions and proper dosage amounts. For any medication to be given at school, the parent consent form and the health care provider medication order form must be on file. A signed [Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan](#) can serve as the provider medication order.

## 2. What is the Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan?

The Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan is a document that spells out the steps to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction. It lists symptoms of an allergic reaction and the action to be taken. It is individualized for your child, and signed by your child's health care provider. This plan is reviewed and shared with appropriate school staff.

## 3. Who receives training in the use of injectable epinephrine (such as Epi-Pen®) and other medications?

The school nurse is responsible for training staff in symptom recognition and administration of medications (such as Epi-Pen®, oral antihistamines, inhalers). There will be trained staff accompanying students who have medications on field trips.

## 4. Where are emergency medications stored?

Emergency medications are stored unlocked in the health office. If a student carries their epinephrine auto-injector with them, such as in their backpack, notify the school nurse of its location and be sure that either an Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan or the appropriate medication order/consent has been completed. When students keep their epinephrine auto-injector with them, parents/guardians are encouraged to keep a "back-up" auto-injector in the school health office.

## 5. What classroom accommodations can I expect?

Typical interventions include hand washing before and after eating and education/awareness to avoid specific allergen and cross-contamination. Classroom parents/guardians may be notified through written communication of food allergies in a class, without mention of any student's name. Discuss an acceptable plan for snacks with the teacher and nurse. If possible, provide safe/alternative snacks to keep in the classroom for your child in case a classroom snack

# FOOD ALLERGIES AT SCHOOL: A PARENT/GUARDIAN GUIDE

cannot be eaten.

6. **What about the lunchroom?** Some schools have designated allergy friendly seating in the lunchroom. This allows children who are eating foods free of the identified allergens to sit together. This avoids secluding students with allergies from classmates. If you would like your child to have this seating option, you may discuss this with the school nurse. If your child eats school breakfast or lunch, let the school nurse know so dietary modifications can be made. A [medical form](#) signed by your child's health care provider will need to be returned to the school nurse for submission to the MMSD Food and Nutrition Department.
7. **Who in the building is informed of my child's allergy?** A confidential Emergency Conditions List is distributed to all staff. This list contains the names and photos of students in the building with emergency health conditions.
8. **Is my child eligible for a 504 plan?** Students with food allergies may qualify for Section 504. Section 504 is a federal law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of an individual's disability. Its purpose is to ensure that students with disabilities are not denied access to educational programs and opportunities on the basis of their disability. This may be discussed in greater detail with your school nurse.
9. **What about bus transportation?** If you have questions regarding training of bus drivers or bus attendants, you should contact the bus company providing services for MMSD.
10. **How else can I support my child?** As developmentally appropriate, teach your child self-management skills:
  - a. Recognize safe and unsafe foods
  - b. Identify strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe allergens; avoid eating anything with unknown ingredients
  - c. Recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
  - d. Alert an adult that they may be having an allergy-related reaction
  - e. Read food labels
  - f. Not accept food from others without checking with knowledgeable adult or share eating utensils