Allergy Awareness & EpiPen® Use
Common food allergies in children

- Milk
- Egg
- Peanut
- Tree Nuts
- Shellfish
- Fish
- Soy
- Whey
Researchers believe that the prevalence of food allergies is increasing and the number of deaths from food allergy induced anaphylaxis is growing, and children are the largest group of the population affected by food allergies.

- 6%-8% of US children have food allergies
- 1.2 % of US children have peanut allergies
- 1.3% of US children have egg allergies
- 2.5% of US children have milk allergies

- Peanut allergy is the food allergy most commonly associated with anaphylaxis
- Peanut anaphylaxis accounts for 30,000 Emergency Room visits per year
- 150 deaths per year from peanut and tree nut anaphylaxis
What is an allergy?

- An allergy is an **abnormal response to a normal substance**. This is the body’s attempt to defend itself against substances that are perceived by the body to be harmful (an Allergen).

- There are various degrees of reaction. Symptoms can occur up to 72 hours or more after exposure to the allergen and can last up to several days. Symptoms may or may not be life threatening.

- Allergic reactions could be caused by certain **foods**, some **drugs**, **bee stings**, and products especially **latex**.
ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Skin Contact
- Poison Plants
- Animal Scratches
- Pollen
- Latex

Injection
- Bee Stings

Ingestion
- Medication
- Nuts & Shellfish

Inhalation
- Pollen
- Dust
- Mold & Mildew
- Animal Dander
What is Anaphylaxis?

- Anaphylaxis is the life threatening form of an allergic reaction.
- According to the American Lung Association, it is a “sudden, severe allergic response that usually produces breathing difficulties, collapse and possible death.”
- Usually occurs 1-15 minutes after exposure, rarely after 2 hours.
- Requires immediate action – EpiPen®
- www.allergic-reations.com for a video demonstration of EpiPens®
Symptoms that can occur during an Allergic or Anaphylactic Reaction

- **Skin**: Hives, swelling, itchy red rash
- **Gut**: Cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, gas
- **Neuro**: Weakness, impending doom feeling
- **Respiratory**: Itchy, watery eyes; runny nose; stuffy nose; sneezing; cough; itching or swelling of lips, tongue or throat; changes in voice; difficulty swallowing; tightness in chest; wheezing; shortness of breath; repetitive throat clearing.
- **Cardiovascular**: reduced blood pressure, increased heart rate, shock, pale and sweaty.

**Common sites for allergic reactions**
- **Mouth**: (swelling of the lips, tongue, itching lips)
- **Airways**: (wheezing or breathing problems)
- **Digestive tract**: (stomach cramps, vomiting, diarrhea)
- **Skin**: (hives, rashes, or eczema)
# Allergic Reactions vs. Anaphylactic Reactions

### Anaphylactic Reactions
- Hives
- Swelling (face, lips, tongue, throat, upper airway)
- Difficulty breathing (chest tightness)
- Vomiting, diarrhea, cramping
- Difficulty swallowing (voice changes)
- Weakness, paleness, sweating
- Feeling of impending doom

### Allergic Reactions
- Runny Nose
- Itchy, Red, watery eyes
- Local reaction to sting, *UNLESS* known to be allergic to venom.
Anaphylactic Reactions

- An Allergic Reaction can advance at any time to an Anaphylactic Reaction.
- An Anaphylactic Reaction can happen very quickly – usually 1-15 minutes after being exposed to an allergen (nuts, bees, latex, foods)
- Anaphylactic Reactions can involve many symptoms or just one severe symptom (rapidly progressing hives, difficulty breathing, upper airway swelling.)
Recognize Anaphylactic Reactions

- Be aware of the students in your classroom that have life threatening allergies
- Be aware of what the student is allergic to (nuts, latex, bee stings, foods)
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of an Anaphylactic Reaction. Learn to use an EpiPen®. Ask your school nurse for training.
- RESPOND to those symptoms

*Do Not Ignore*
What to do when an Anaphylactic Reaction occurs in your Classroom

- Call the School Nurse immediately.
- Identify the student and problem to the School Nurse.
- Ask the student if they have their EpiPen® on their person.
- Administer EpiPen®
- Call 911
- **DO NOT** send a student who you suspect of having an anaphylactic reaction to the Health Office. **Call the School Nurse** to come to your classroom. She will bring an EpiPen® and emergency equipment to assist the student.
EpiPen® Instructions

- EpiPens® are easy to use
- Remember, you must hold EpiPen® in place for 10 seconds. It will “hurt” – burning sensation.
- Training is available through the school nurse
- Covered by the Good Samaritan Law
How does the Medication help?

- EpiPen® = Epinephrine Medication
- Quickly constricts blood vessels
- Relaxes smooth muscles in the lungs to improve breathing
- Stimulates heartbeat
- Works to reverse hives and swelling around the face and lips
- Wears off in 10-20 minutes, sometimes requires a second dose, critical that 911 is called and student transported to emergency room!
Emergency Action Plan

- **TAKE ALL REACTIONS SERIOUSLY**
- Administer an Epipen if you recognize a student’s reaction as anaphylactic or call a trained school staff member immediately to assist with the administration of an Epipen
- Call 911
- Monitor student’s breathing and circulation - CPR if needed
- Notify Parent/Guardian
- **The “Good Samaritan Law” protects all individuals who administer an Epipen from liability.**
- Deciding to become Epipen trained is a personal choice. If you make the decision to become certified, please see your school nurse.
- Certification involves reviewing the information packet provided, demonstration of Epipen administration, and an understanding of allergic and anaphylactic reactions and how to react to those situations.
3 R’s for handling a Reaction

- **RECOGNIZE** the Signs & Symptoms
  *Life threatening or not?*
- **REACT** quickly –
  *Activate the student’s Emergency Care Plan*
- **REVIEW** what caused the reaction and did the plan work? Evaluate the Emergency Action Plan implemented. Any lessons learned? Any changes to the plan required?