



OFFICE OF  
SCHOOL HEALTH

## Managing Your Child's Allergies at School

Approximately 4-6% of children have a food allergy; food allergies are the most common cause of anaphylaxis (a life-threatening allergic reaction) in children at school. **The NYC Department of Education does not provide a nut, milk or other allergen-free school environment or food service because the risk of accidental exposure is always present.** No school can guarantee an allergen-free environment.

We want to ensure that your child receives the best care possible while at school. We take allergies, food safety and student health very seriously. This means that parents, medical providers and the school team need to work together to manage your child's allergy.

### Your Role as the Parent/Caregiver

- The Parent/Caregiver should meet with the school nurse as early as possible to create/review the [Allergy Response Plan](#) and determine what foods the student can eat from the cafeteria.
  - For your reference, the SchoolFood menus can be found at this [link](#).
- Ask your child's doctor to complete these forms:
  - [Allergy/Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Form](#) (MAF)
  - [Medical Review of Student with Severe Allergies Form](#)

Make sure that the emergency contact information on these forms is up to date. Give the completed forms to the school nurse.

- Give the school nurse any medications prescribed by your doctor for managing your child's allergy.
  - If an epi-pen is prescribed, the school will work to ensure that the epi-pen is kept near your child – in the classroom, lunchroom and on the playground. Or, if your child is able to use the epi-pen by him/herself, then your child will be permitted to carry the epi-pen. The school nurse will also have an epi-pen available in the nurse's office.
- Give the school nurse a list of foods and ingredients that your child needs to avoid.
- Let your school nurse know if your child has asthma, since allergic reactions may be worse in children who have both allergies and asthma.
- Teach your child about their allergy so that they know which foods to avoid.
- Make sure your child knows not to trade food with other students and not to eat anything offered in school without knowing what is in it.

### Your Child's Role

- If your child is able to use an epi-pen by him/herself, then your child should carry the epi-pen at all times.
- Your child should wash hands before and after handling food, should not trade food with others, and should not eat anything offered in school without knowing what is in it.

## **School Team Role**

- The school nurse and school physician will work with your child's doctor and the school staff to create a prevention and response plan for your child.
- Your child's school will ensure that students with food allergies are included in all school activities.
- Schools should consider prevention strategies, including:
  - "Allergy-aware" seating during meals and snacks in both the cafeteria and the classroom
  - Designated food-free zones
  - Avoiding the use of allergens in class projects, celebrations and snacks
- School staff members will be trained to respond to possible allergic reactions, including how to use an epi-pen.
- If an allergic reaction occurs, a member of the school staff will:
  - Notify the school nurse if allergic reaction occurs and call EMS/911
  - Contact you and your child's medical provider

