

## **FOOD ALLERGY SYMPTOMS**

Symptoms typically appear 2 min to 2 hours after a person has eaten the food to which they are allergic.

- Tingling sensation in the mouth
- Swelling of the tongue and throat
- Rash and/or Eczema
- Hives and swelling
- Vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- Wheezing
- Difficulty breathing
- Drop in blood pressure
- Loss of consciousness
- And (very rarely) death

Allergic reactions to food vary among students and can range from mild to severe life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. The severity of a reaction is not predictable. Because there is a cumulative effect from past exposures to an allergen, the severity of a future exposure cannot be predicted.

- Peanut and tree nuts account for 92% of severe and fatal reactions, along with fish and shellfish.
- The student with an undiagnosed food allergy may experience his/her first food allergy reaction at school.

## **HOW A CHILD MIGHT DESCRIBE A REACTION**

- This food is too spicy
- My tongue is hot (or burning)
- It feels like something is poking my tongue
- My tongue (or mouth) is tingling (or burning or itches)
- It (my tongue) feels like there is hair on it
- My mouth feels funny
- There's a frog in my throat
- There's something stuck in my throat
- My tongue feels full (or heavy)
- My lips feel tight
- It feels like there are bugs in there (to describe itchy ears)
- It (my throat) feels thick
- It feels like a bump is on the back of my tongue (throat)

## **WHAT IS ANAPHYLAXIS?**

A potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after exposure to their specific allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a **collection** of symptoms (described above) affecting **multiple** systems in the body. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock that are potentially fatal. Not every person who has a food allergy will necessarily have an anaphylactic episode. However, if you have had one once, then it is likely to happen again.

## **HOW TO PREVENT ANAPHYLAXIS AND CONTROL REACTIONS**

- Strict avoidance of allergy-causing foods is the ONLY way to prevent a reaction
- Be aware of possible "cross-contact" with other foods in home kitchens and restaurants
- Label reading (use reference pages to learn other names for foods to avoid)
- Carry antihistamine and/or Epipen at all times, as your doctor recommends to control reactions.
- Always call 911 immediately after administering epinephrine. Symptoms may return and monitoring is critical.