

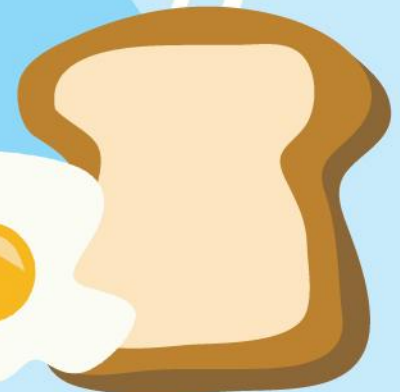
Peanut & Nut-Free Classrooms

2008 Spring Parent Night

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Adapted from www.FoodAllergy.org

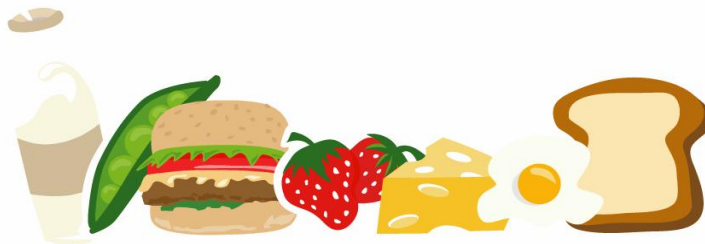
& www.calgaryallergy.ca



Food Allergy Overview

- The role of the immune system is to protect the body from germs and disease
- A food allergy is an abnormal response by the immune system to a food protein
- When the food is eaten, the immune system thinks the food is harmful and releases histamine and other chemicals to “attack” the enemy
- Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening allergic reaction
- Complete and strict avoidance is the only way to prevent a reaction

(Source: www.FoodAllergy.org)

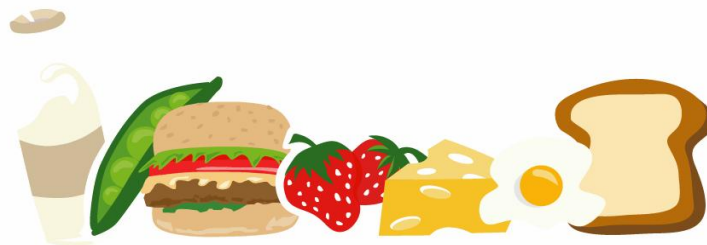


Shocking Facts!

- Approximately 1 in 25 Americans have a food allergy
- Each year in the U.S., anaphylaxis to food causes over 30,000 emergency room visits and 150-200 deaths
- In 5 years, the number of children with peanut allergies doubled (1997-2002)

(Source: www.FoodAllergy.org)

Reading Food Labels Saves Lives!

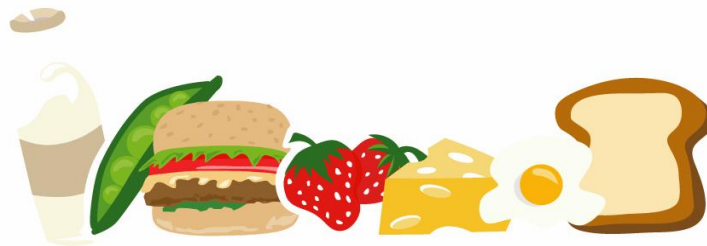


Food Allergies in Schools

- Most reactions in schools occur from food in the classroom used for projects or celebrations
- Up to 25% of peanut/tree nut reactions in schools are first-time reactions
- Once a reaction begins, there is **no way** to know how severe it will become

(Source: www.FoodAllergy.org)

This is why Strict Avoidance is so important!



What is Strict Avoidance?

- Not eating it
- Not touching it
- Not breathing it in
- Not coming into contact with microscopic residue

Just touching a contaminated surface or breathing in particles can trigger a reaction!



Read the Label – Save a Life

Peanuts and Nuts are not always visible. The only way to know for sure is to read the label.

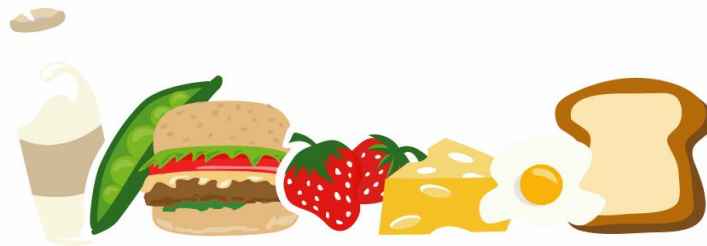
Invisible amounts peanuts/nuts can hide just about anywhere:

- Snack Food: Pretzels, crackers, granola, chips, popcorn, etc.
- Sauces: Spaghetti sauce, BBQ sauce, etc
- Baked Goods: Cookies, cake, cupcakes, brownies, donuts, etc.
- Treats: Ice cream, candy, chocolate
- Fried Foods
- Fast Food
- Ethnic Food



Peanut/Nut-Free Classrooms

- Food, craft material, or other products that contain peanuts or tree nuts are NOT allowed in the room
- This also includes items that:
 - “may” contain traces of peanuts or nuts
 - “may” be processed on equipment (or in a plant/factory) that also processes peanuts or nuts



Peanut/Nut-Free Classrooms

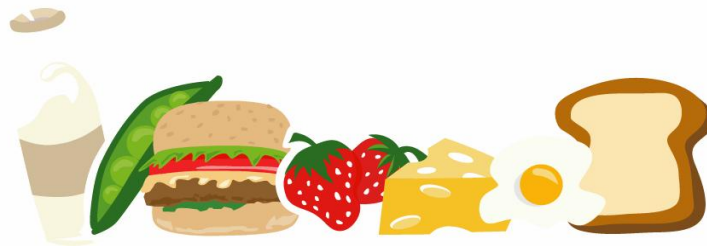
- If peanut or tree nut ingredients are found, the food cannot be eaten in the classroom
- Your child will either:
 - Be given an alternative snack -or-
 - Be brought to a different room to eat his/her snack



Be Careful Before School, too

If your child eats peanuts or nuts before school:

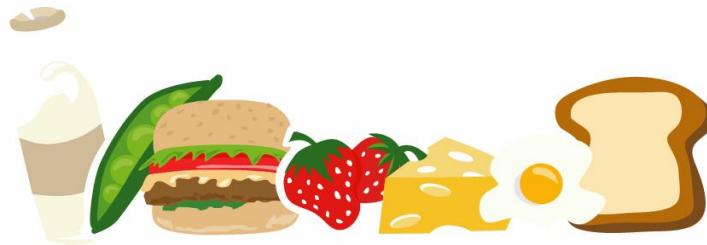
- Wash his/her hands *and* face with warm soapy water
- Hand sanitizers (like Purel) do NOT remove peanut/nut residue!
- If peanut/nut residue is on your child's hands, it can be transferred to the desk, chair, toys, other classroom objects, and playground equipment



Hidden Sources of Peanuts/Nuts

Allergens Can Be Found Other Products:

- Craft Material
- Lotions & Oils
- Cosmetics
- Stuffing in Toys/Bean Bags
- Pet Food
- Soap & Shampoo
- Medications & Vitamins

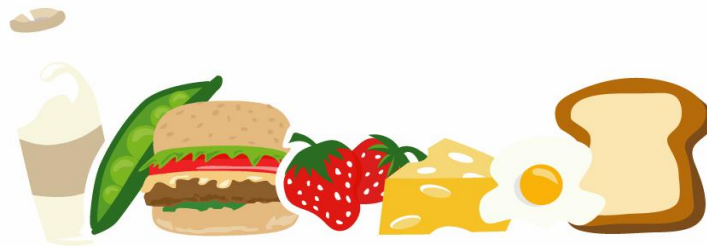


Cross-Contamination

Making a peanut butter sandwich - the knife gets dipped into the peanut butter and then the jelly. Then sandwich gets cut on the cutting board and put on a plate. Then the knife and the cutting board get wiped with a sponge.

- At this point there are traces of peanuts on the:
- Knife
 - Jelly
 - Cutting Board
 - Plate
 - Hands
 - Sponge and everything the sponge touches

(Source: www.calgaryallergy.ca)



Cross-Contamination

Now imagine that later on you want to make cupcakes for your child's birthday party at school:

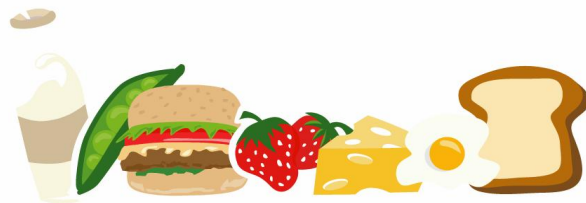
- You diligently check all the ingredients, and none of them contain peanuts or nuts.
- You then wipe off the plastic container and put the cupcakes in it.

But the sponge was used to wipe off the knife and the cutting board that was used to make the peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Now these cupcakes may contain traces of peanuts!



Prevention Is Everyone's Responsibility

- Read Every Label, Every Time
- Never rely on a "Safe List" of food – because manufacturers can change their practices or ingredients at anytime. What was "safe" yesterday may not be safe today.
- When in doubt, please contact the school nurse.



References

Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network

www.FoodAllergy.org

Calgary Allergy Network:

www.calgaryallergy.ca

