Allergens Information

Anaphylaxis
Anaphylaxis describes sudden and severe, life threatening allergic reactions that occur as a result of exposure to a substance. Anaphylaxis is different than a localized allergic reaction, which affects only one organ system.

With anaphylaxis, more than one organ system is involved. Without immediate, appropriate treatment, anaphylaxis can quickly (within minutes) lead to a drop in blood pressure, unconsciousness, coma and death.

The treatment is a dose of epinephrine, given with an EpiPen. It will, hopefully, slow down the reaction long enough to get the person to further medical attention and treatment.

Some Common Causes of Anaphylaxis
- Foods (nuts, peanuts, eggs, milk, shellfish,)
- Food additives
- Medications
- Insect stings
- Latex.

Nuts and Peanuts
Nuts and Peanuts have become two of North America's most allergic foods and are one of the leading causes of anaphylaxis, especially in the school setting.

Nut residue stays on items such as table tops, computers, library books and playground equipment until cleaned off with soap and water. Even trace amounts of nuts can be enough to cause anaphylaxis. A tiny amount of residue ingested through the eyes, nose, or mouth can prove fatal to an allergic person. It is important that a person allergic to nuts not come in contact with nuts or nut residue.

Symptoms of Anaphylaxis
These symptoms can occur in any combination:
- Tingling of mouth and throat.
- Hives and itching of any body part.
- Swelling of any body part (especially eyes, lips, face or tongue)
- Coughing, wheezing.
- Vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain
- Difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Fainting or loss of consciousness

These symptoms must be recognized and treated quickly. If not, the reaction can quickly lead to death. EpiPens and 911 are the only treatment!

Reduce the Risk and Nut Safe
It is important to choose food items for school that do not contain peanuts/nuts. Teach children to wash hands before and after eating. Teach children not to share food and to put garbage in its place.

Nut safe means that the food does not contain nuts, nut butter, nut oil or any form of nut at all. It must not contain traces of nuts/peanuts. If the product does not have an ingredient label (such as bulk bin products or store bought baked goods).

Read ingredients carefully. Foods that are important to check are: cakes, muffins, brownies, cookies, candy, chocolate, granola and cereal bars, potato chips, any food packed or made with oil, ice cream and popsicles.

Canadian food manufacturers are required to list ingredients. Foreign manufacturers are not. Please, err on the side of caution.

If Your Child Has Allergies
- Provide the school and teacher with complete details about the allergy.
- Have your child wear a Medic Alert bracelet at all times.
- Provide an EpiPen for your child (the school cannot administer epinephrine unless it is specifically prescribed for that child).
- Educate your child not to share food with other people.