

## FOOD ALLERGY FACTS & STATISTICS:

More than 12 million Americans have food allergies. That's one in 25, or 4 percent of the population. About 3 million children in the U.S. have food allergies.

Food allergy is believed to be the leading cause of anaphylaxis outside the hospital setting, causing an estimated 50,000 emergency department visits each year in the U.S. It is estimated that anaphylaxis caused by food results in 150 deaths each year. Death can be sudden, sometimes occurring within minutes.

**Eight foods account for 90 percent of all food-allergic reactions in the United States:**

**milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (e.g., walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans), wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish.**

There is no cure for food allergies. Strict avoidance of food allergens and early recognition and management of allergic reactions to food are important measures to prevent serious health consequences. Even trace amounts of a food allergen can cause a reaction.

Early administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) is crucial to successfully treating anaphylactic reactions. Epinephrine is available by prescription in a self-injectable device (EpiPen or Twinject).

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that happens to some people who have allergies to food, insect stings, drugs, or latex.

Anaphylaxis happens very quickly and affects your entire body. Signs usually start within 5 to 30 minutes of coming into contact with the thing to which you are allergic. But it may take more than an hour for you to notice anaphylactic symptoms.

Warning signs may include: a red rash with welts that is usually itchy; swollen throat or swollen areas of the body; wheezing; passing out; chest tightness; trouble breathing; a hoarse voice; trouble swallowing; vomiting; diarrhea; stomach cramping; a pale or red color to the face or body.

Anaphylaxis requires immediate medical treatment. If you think you are having this type of reaction use your auto injectable epinephrine and call 911 immediately.

*\*\*Reminder: Each new school year families will receive medication release forms that need to be filled out by your children's MD and kept on file in the Nurse's office. It is extremely important for your children to carry their inhalers and EpiPen with them at all times so they can be treated in case of an emergency.*