



No Nut Policy

Introduction

Elliott Park School aims to practise a nut free policy, although we recognise that this cannot be guaranteed. This policy serves to set out all measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. The school aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts yet also help them, as they grow up, to take responsibility as to what foods they can eat and to be aware of where they may be put at risk.

All people in a Nut Restricted school, before, during and after school hours, are asked to follow the Nut Restricted efforts by being extra vigilant to ensure no nut containing products enter the school for the safety of the students with nut allergies. This is due to cross-contact issues that can result with nut oils/residue left on surfaces. For example, if a child with a nut allergy is exposed to even a small amount of nut or nut oils/residue left on surfaces, a reaction can occur from this very small amount of nut residue coming in contact with a child. Nut residue that is oily can remain on surfaces for a long period of time. Each time a child is exposed, (even if a reaction doesn't occur) their risk to a more severe reaction increases. Therefore, every effort to protect these children is required.

Parents

We ask parents not to include any nuts or products containing nuts in their child's lunch box. Foods made from or containing nuts include:

- Peanut butter
- Chocolate spread (containing hazelnut, please check label)
- Cereal bars containing nuts
- Cakes containing nuts, for example: walnut coffee loaf, almond slice.
- Biscuits containing nuts
- Sesame seed rolls
- Houmous

Definition

Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially fatal. Anaphylaxis is your body's immune system reacting badly to a substance (an allergen), such as food, which it wrongly perceives as a threat. The whole body can be affected, usually within minutes of contact with an allergen, though sometimes the reaction can happen hours later.

This policy refers to nuts but at present includes sesame seeds, pine kernels, coconut and sunflower seeds.

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Symptoms

The symptoms of anaphylaxis usually start between 3 and 60 minutes after contact with the allergen. Less commonly, they can occur a few hours or even days after contact.

An anaphylactic reaction may lead to feeling unwell or dizzy or may cause fainting due to a sudden drop in blood pressure.

Narrowing of the airways can also occur at the same time, with or without the drop-in blood pressure. This can cause breathing difficulties and wheezing.

Other symptoms

- swollen eyes, lips, genitals, hands, feet and other areas (this is called angioedema),
- itching,
- *a strange metallic taste in the mouth,*
- sore, red, itchy eyes,
- changes in heart rate
- a sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- itchy skin or nettle-rash (hives)
- unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhoea, or nausea and fever.

Anaphylaxis varies in severity. Sometimes it causes only mild itchiness and swelling, but in some people it can cause sudden death.

Anaphylaxis can lead to death if breathing becomes severely obstructed or if blood pressure becomes extremely low (known as shock).

If symptoms start soon after contact with the allergen and rapidly get worse, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

Staff

The onus falls on all staff to read and follow this policy both in school and when out on trips and outings.

If parents bring in any food or treats (such as for birthdays) the teacher must check the ingredients carefully. Packaging must be checked for:

- Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers
- This product contains nuts

Caution must be taken at certain times of year such as Easter and Christmas. When distributing of confectionary, care must be taken to ensure that no nuts are included in the product. Fruit sweets such as Haribo are a better alternative. Particular products that are a cause for concern are:

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- Walnut Whips
- Celebrations
- Roses
- Heroes
- Quality Street

All product packaging must be checked for warnings directed at nut allergy sufferers and if the following or similar are displayed, the product must not be used in school.

- Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers
- This product contains nuts

All children should be reminded about the good hygiene practice of washing hands before and after eating which helps to reduce the risk of secondary contamination.

Children

How can I explain to my child that nuts aren't allowed in their school, especially when all he/she will eat is peanut butter?

Empathy and compassion are the key elements here, with a feeling of good fortune that your own child doesn't suffer from this potentially life-threatening allergy. Help your child understand that while some allergies can be a nuisance with low level reactions (i.e. stuffed-up noses and sneezing) students who suffer from peanut allergies can have very dangerous, even life-threatening reactions. Explain to your child that by not bringing nut products to school, he/she is helping take care of, keep safe, and even protect these students with nut allergies. Children will feel proud to be able to help out in this way, as well as maybe even feeling a bit fortunate that they don't suffer from this allergy.