



**ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL**

**A L L E R G Y
A W A R E N E S S
C H A L L E N G E**

WITH

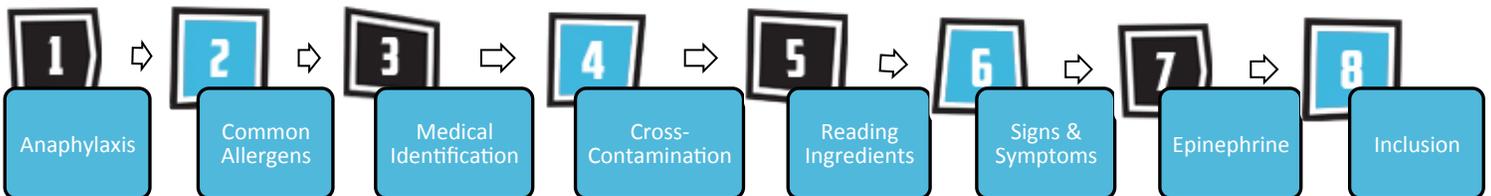


Food
Allergy
Canada

Teacher Lesson Plan

“Do you Know Allergies?”

Junior (Grades 4-6)



Topic 1: What is Anaphylaxis?

Key Learning Points:

- 1) Those with allergies are like everybody else, but have to avoid certain triggers.
- 2) Food allergies affect many people.
- 3) Allergic reactions can be much more serious than environmental allergies/sneezing.
- 4) The immune system is responsible for allergic reactions.
- 5) People with serious food allergies can get very sick if they eat the foods that they are allergic to. This serious life-threatening allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis. and requires treatment with epinephrine (e.g. EpiPen[®]) and hospitalization.
- 6) People can get allergies when they are young or old, and we don't know why people get them, or lose them.

Suggested Materials: Allergy Word Search, Food Allergy Word Jumble

Activity: Discussion

Questions and Explanations

1. **Do you know someone with a food allergy? What are they allergic to?**
 - a. Help students understand that this is a problem that affects everyone (e.g. classmates, adults, siblings etc.).
2. **Can allergies be serious, or does it mean that you just sneeze a lot?**
 - a. Explain that allergies can be severe and potentially life-threatening during a reaction called anaphylaxis.
3. **Start a brainstorm on what systems of the body are responsible for what activities.**
 - a. What system is responsible for breathing?
 - i. The respiratory system
 - b. What system is responsible for the blood circulating in the body?
 - i. The circulatory system
 - c. What system is responsible for digesting food?
 - i. The digestive system
 - d. What system is responsible for keeping us safe against disease and harmful bacteria?
 - i. The immune system

4. **Why is the immune system important?**
 - a. It helps us stay safe and healthy by identifying and fighting foreign intruders like germs and bacteria.
 - b. People with food allergies have a different immune system as it reacts similarly to foods as it does to germs and bacteria.

5. **Why do you think the immune system is responsible for allergic reactions?**
 - a. It treats certain foods as foreign invaders and releases histamine (One of the substances released into the tissues during an allergic reaction.) in an attempt to attack them. This results in symptoms of an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis.

6. **How do you think people get food allergies and are they contagious?**
 - a. Scientists do not exactly know why some people get food allergies and others do not. There is a lot of research being done to the cause of allergies, however there is currently no cure. Reiterate that this is why it is so important why we all learn how to help keep those with allergies safe.

7. **What are some precautions that people with allergies have to take to avoid an anaphylactic reaction?**
 - a. Read ingredient lists
 - b. Ask about ingredients at restaurants
 - c. Never take chances with unknown food
 - d. Always carry their epinephrine auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen[®])

Topic 2: Common Allergens

Key Learning Points:

- 1) People can be allergic to many things, including foods, medicine, environmental triggers (e.g., dust mites, tree pollens) insect stings, and latex.
- 2) People can be allergic to more than one thing. Some have multiple allergies that are all serious.
- 3) Allergens can be ingredients in other foods (e.g. milk in butter).
- 4) Introduce celiac disease as a condition where people cannot eat wheat.
- 5) Introduce lactose intolerance as a condition similar to a milk allergy, but with less severe symptoms and affecting the digestive system.

Suggested Materials: Allergy Awareness Pledge

Activity: Discussion

Questions and Explanations

- 1) What do you think the top 10 most common food allergies are in Canada?**
 - a. Peanut, tree nut, egg, milk, seafood, soy, wheat, sesame, mustard and sulphites.
- 2) What's the difference between a peanut and a tree nut?**
 - a. They are two separate allergens. Someone can be allergic to one, but not the other. Peanuts are a legume, while tree nuts are a nut.
- 3) Is lactose intolerance the same as a milk allergy?**
 - a. Help students understand that allergies affect a different system in the body – the immune system and requires immediate medical attention. Intolerances are generally associated with the digestive system and cause other symptoms such as an upset stomach.
- 4) Other than food, what can people be allergic to?**
 - a. Medicine, latex, environmental triggers, and insect stings.
- 5) Are peanuts the most serious allergy of all?**
 - a. No, all allergens can be serious and cause anaphylaxis.
- 6) What are the foods students are allergic to at our school? What rules do we have in place to help keep everyone with allergies safe?**

Topic 3 - Medical Identification

Key Learning Points:

- 1) Medical bracelets can be used to show what someone is allergic to.
- 2) In addition, they are used to show other health conditions (diabetes, asthma, epilepsy).
- 3) They come in different shapes and styles.
- 4) They are important to wear at all times if you have allergies.
- 5) People can have trouble breathing and speaking during an allergic reaction, which is why medical bracelets can be so important.

Suggested Materials: Design a Bracelet

Activity: Discussion & Design a Bracelet

- **Design a Bracelet:** Ask students to draw their own bracelet. What would it look like? What important information would be on it?

Questions and Explanations

- 1) **Are medical bracelets only worn to help remember your own allergies?**
 - a. No, they help other people know what you are allergic to and that you might require help in an emergency.
- 2) **Why is medical bracelet important for someone with food allergies?**
 - a. Severe symptoms may prevent them from telling someone what is wrong. (e.g. difficulty breathing/speaking)
- 3) **In what situations would this bracelet be particularly useful?**
 - a. Examples could be: with others who aren't aware of your allergies, travelling, and when alone.
- 4) **What other health conditions can be shown on a medical bracelet?**
 - a. Diabetes, asthma, epilepsy are a few examples.
- 5) **If you were to design your own bracelet, what would it look like?**

Topic 4: Cross-Contamination

Key Learning Points:

- 1) Remember the foods that are okay/not okay for our classroom.
- 2) Washing our hands with soap and water is best for getting food off – not hand sanitizer.
- 3) Knowing what cross-contamination is, and how it can be avoided (washing hands, keeping food on own plates/trays).
- 4) Know that food crumbs are not only on hands, but also on desks, trays and even on our faces.
- 5) Review that food should only be consumed in designated areas.
- 6) To never share food, water bottles, utensils etc.

Suggested Materials: What is Cross-Contamination

Activity: Discussion & Poster Contest

- **Poster Contest** – Ask students to create a hand-washing poster. Reward the best drawing(s) by placing it above the hand-washing station(s).

Questions and Explanations

- 1) **What foods are not allowed in our classroom? (if any).**
- 2) **Should we wash our hands before, or after we eat? Or both? Why?**
 - a. Both before and after are optimal to keep us, and others safe and healthy.
- 3) **Should we wash our hands with hand sanitizer or soap and water?**
 - a. It's been proven that soap and water is best at getting food proteins off of our hands.
 - b. While hand sanitizer only removes germs, soap and water removes both germs and allergens.
- 4) **Why should we always eat our food in the room we eat lunch?**
 - a. We do not want food crumbs in places we expect to be safe (e.g. the classroom or gymnasium).

- 5) **Why is it a bad idea to use the same knife for jam that was used also for peanut butter? What is it called when two things touch like this example?**
- This is called cross-contamination and it is dangerous to people with food allergies. A tiny trace of a food can cause an allergic reaction and can be transferred through our hands, utensils or cooking surfaces.
- 6) **Why should we never share food at school? What else should we not share that could be cross-contaminated?**
- It's difficult to know what is in our food. What's safe for one person may not be safe for another.
 - Other things we shouldn't share are water bottles, napkins utensils, plates, lip balm etc.

Topic 5: Reading Ingredients

Key Learning Points:

- 1) Know that ingredient lists are where you can find out what's in your food.
- 2) A peanut free logo doesn't cover a tree nut allergy or other allergens.
- 3) Products that say "may contain" products are not worth the risk.

Suggested Materials: Ingredient List Detective

Activity: Discussion & "Check a Label" Activity:

- **Check a Label:** Ask children to find a product at home with at least two common allergens on the ingredient list. Ask them to report what the product was, and what common allergens were inside.

Questions and Explanations

- 1) **Have you ever read an ingredient list before? Are they easy to read?**
- 2) **Does a peanut free logo on a package mean it's okay for anyone to eat with a peanut and tree nut allergy?**
 - a. No, remember that tree nut allergy is different than a peanut allergy. People can be allergic to one or the other, or both.
- 3) **Who would someone with allergies talk to if they wanted to get a safe meal at a restaurant?**
 - a. Wait staff, chef, or manager.
- 4) **What do you think would be all of the ingredients in a pizza? Are there any common allergens in it?**
 - a. Wheat, dairy, possibly seafood.
- 5) **When a product says "may contain" an allergen, why do you think it is not worth the risk for someone with food allergies to eat?**
 - a. Unless you call the manufacturer directly, it's hard to know what the level of risk would be. It's best to not take the chance. When in doubt, do without.
 - b. Don't make assumptions about food, as it's difficult to know what exactly is inside.

Topic 6: Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction

Key Learning Points:

- 1) Learn that allergic reactions are very serious, potentially resulting in anaphylaxis.
- 2) Recognize the different symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- 3) When someone gets sick with an allergic reaction, it's an emergency.
 - a. Speak up and get an adult right away.
 - b. Find out where their medicine is.
- 4) Epinephrine (e.g. EpiPen[®]) must be used upon first signs of anaphylaxis.

Suggested Materials: Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction, Allergy Awareness Project

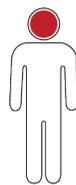
Activity: Discussion

Allergy Awareness Project – Encourage students to create a tool that can help raise food allergy awareness. It can be done in a creative way such as a poster, video, poem etc.

Questions and Explanations

- 1) **Have you ever had, or seen someone have an allergic reaction? Where can they happen?**
 - a. At school, home, restaurants, travelling etc.
- 2) **What are some of the signs of an allergic reaction?**
 - a. Cover all of the signs and symptoms with this handy “Think FAST” chart:

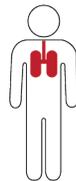
THINK “FAST”



Face
itching,
redness,
swelling



Stomach
pain,
vomiting,
diarrhea,
nausea



Airway
trouble breathing,
coughing, wheezing,
trouble swallowing
and speaking



Total body
hives, rash,
weakness, paleness,
sense of doom, loss
of consciousness

Other: dizziness, pale/blue colour

- 3) **Who could you tell if you saw someone feeling really sick and needed help?**
- 4) **Why should you never keep an allergic reaction a secret?**
 - a. Remind students that reactions worsen quickly and it's important to get help from an adult right away.
 - b. Sometimes people might feel embarrassed if they are experiencing all of these strange symptoms. They also may not want to feel like a burden by asking for help from others. Always encourage your friends with allergies to tell you if they ever feel symptoms.
- 5) **What number would you call in an emergency? What would you say on the phone?**
 - a. 911. Paramedics recommend that you use the word “anaphylaxis” on the phone so they are prepared when arriving at the scene.
- 6) **What is the name of the medicine that should be used to treat an anaphylactic reaction?**
 - a. Epinephrine – more commonly known as the brand EpiPen®.
 - b. It must be given right away upon first signs of anaphylaxis as symptoms can worsen very quickly.

Topic 7 – Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

Key Learning Points:

- 1) Epinephrine is an important medicine that can help with an allergic reaction.
- 2) It can commonly be referred to as an EpiPen[®]. Auto-injectors contain a needle that injects a medicine named epinephrine.
- 3) They are not a toy and should never be played with.
- 4) It should be used upon the first signs of anaphylaxis and can help save a life.
- 5) Two doses should be carried in case the first dose does not help subdue the reaction.

Suggested Materials: Order the Emergency Procedure

Activity: Discussion & Demonstrating an Auto-Injector

- **Demonstrating an Auto-Injector** – If an auto-injector trainer is available, show the class what it looks like and how it is used.

Questions and Explanations

- 1) **What are examples of medicines that people need because of their health?**
 - a. Puffers for asthma.
 - b. Pills for certain conditions.
 - c. Epinephrine for anaphylaxis.
- 2) **How is carrying a medicine like epinephrine similar to wearing a seatbelt?**
 - a. It protects you when you need it. It's best to have it than not.
- 3) **What exactly is an epinephrine auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen[®])**
 - a. It is a needle, which is why we take them seriously and never play with them. They have one dose of medicine inside called epinephrine, which could help save a life during an anaphylactic reaction. EpiPen[®] is currently the most common known brand of epinephrine auto-injectors.
- 4) **How do you think epinephrine works to help with an allergic reaction?**
 - a. It helps in three important ways:
 - i. Tightens up blood vessels, which reduces swelling.
 - ii. Helps airways open up by relaxing muscles around the lungs.
 - iii. Prevents the release of further allergic chemicals.

5) What do you think the proper steps would be to handle an emergency involving a severe allergic reaction?

- a. Step 1 – Use epinephrine
- b. Step 2 – Call 911
- c. Step 3 – Use a second dose if reaction is getting worse
- d. Step 4 – Travel to the hospital in an ambulance

Note that using epinephrine is the first step. It is very important that it is used right away to treat an anaphylactic reaction as symptoms can worsen very quickly.

6) Why should people with allergies always carry at least two doses? Where should they keep them?

- a. Sometimes a reaction can be quite severe and need extra medicine to treat it.
- b. It's important the medicine is carried with them at all times. Either in a pouch, backpack, pocket or purse.

7) Should someone with food allergies eat food if they don't have their epinephrine auto-injector with them?

- a. No, it's not worth the risk.

8) If you ever saw one lying on the ground, should you ever touch it?

- a. Never. Report it to a teacher right away. It is possible that someone dropped it and it's important that an adult solves the problem as it contains a needle inside.

9) After someone uses adrenaline/epinephrine, where should they go and why?

- a. They need to go to a hospital right away. Sometimes a reaction can get worse after using epinephrine. That's why it's so important to be looked at by doctors at a hospital to make sure the allergic reaction is gone.

Topic 8 - Inclusion

Key Learning Points:

- 1) We are all different in many ways.
- 2) Being different is what makes us all special, and altogether a stronger group.
- 3) People can be different because of food allergies, but they are still like everyone else.
- 4) People with food allergies can do everything that anyone else can do.
- 5) Food allergies are never a reason to exclude someone.
- 6) How we can be good friends to someone with or without a food allergy.

Suggested Materials: What Makes you Unique? Allergy Awareness Pledge

Activity: Discussion & Circle of Differences

- **Circle of Differences** – In a circle, ask everyone to say one unique thing about themselves that makes them special. (e.g. a unique hobby, interest, challenge).

Classroom Discussion Questions:

- 1) **What's something that makes you unique?**
- 2) **Should we ever make fun of someone for being different?**
 - a. What would happen if we did? Remind students about respective policies and punishments.
- 3) **Why do you think people tease/bully? Is it fair?**
- 4) **Why is being different a good thing?**
 - a. Our differences can help make our teams stronger by having different perspectives and views. If everybody was the same, there would not be much variety in life.
- 5) **How does it feel if someone does not invite you to play with the rest of your friends?**
 - a. Remind students that this can often happen because of differences. E.g. not inviting someone to a birthday party because they can't eat the cake.
- 6) **What can we do at school to make sure everyone with food allergies are safe and feel included? At classroom celebrations? During lunchtime?**
 - a. Remind students of related school policies.
 - b. Celebrate with non-food items (books, stickers, games, puzzles).