



ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

ALLERGY
AWARENESS
CHALLENGE

WITH  Food
Allergy
Canada

Teacher Lesson Plan

“Let’s Get Allergy Aware!”

Primary (Grades 1-3)



Topic 1: Respecting Differences

Key Learning Points:

1. Understand that we are all similar in many ways.
2. Understand the things that can make us different:
 - a. Physical (e.g., appearances).
 - b. Emotional (e.g., feelings).
 - c. Health (e.g., conditions).
3. Know that all differences are okay and make us unique

Suggested Materials: “Differences” Colouring Sheet, Follow the Pattern

Activity: Discussion

Questions and Explanations:

1. **Can you name one thing that we all have in common?**
 - We all have ears, eyes, noses etc.
2. **What’s something that makes us different from each other?**
 - Appearances (hair/eye colour, glasses)
 - Culture (e.g., family heritage)
 - Feelings
 - Hobbies
 - Health
3. **Is it okay to be different?**

Ask children to put up their hands for different categories to show that we’re all different (e.g., “Who has green eyes? Blue eyes? Brown eyes?”). Being different is a good thing as these differences make us unique and special and should be respected. Some of us have different bodies and health issues. Some people can’t eat the same foods as everybody else.

4. **Do you know what it’s called when certain foods make someone very sick?**

Food allergies. People with food allergies are different because they can’t eat all of the same foods as everybody else. They can get very sick by eating foods they’re allergic to. Some people are allergic to peanuts, nuts, milk or many other foods.

5. **Did you know there are students in our class/school that have food allergies?**

We can all help them stay safe!

Topic 2: Common Allergens

Key Learning Points:

1. What are the common allergens.
2. Understand that there is more than just food that can cause a reaction.
3. Which foods are safe/unsafe to have at school.

Suggested Materials:

- Connect the Allergens
- Memory Flash Cards
- Word Search
- How Many Allergies?

Activity: Discussion

Questions and Explanations:

1. **Do you know someone with an allergy?**
 - a. What are they allergic to?
2. **Why are food allergies so serious?**
 - a. Because they can make people very sick. So sick that they might need to go to the hospital and need emergency services.
3. **Is it possible to be allergic to more than peanuts and tree nuts?**
 - a. Yes, people can be allergic to many different foods. Other common allergens are milk, eggs, wheat, fish, shellfish, soy, sesame and mustard.
4. **Can people be allergic to more than one thing at the same time?**
 - a. Yes. Some people only have one allergy, some people have many.
5. **What do you think the most common food allergies are?**
 - a. Show pictures from Memory Flash Cards
 - b. Inform students that it's more than food. People can also be allergic to insect stings, medicine and latex.
6. **It's important that we don't bring _____ to school (include any classroom food restrictions).**
 - a. Some of our classmates have food allergies and we don't want to make them sick.

Topic 3: Inclusion

Key Learning Points:

1. Develop a sense of empathy for those who have food allergies.
2. Realize that living with a food allergy can be difficult and that support is needed.
3. Remember that everybody should be included no matter their differences.

Suggested Materials:

- “May Contain Peanuts/Nuts”
- What’s Safe for Lunch
- What’s Safe for Jerome
- Colouring Sheets (Differences, Hand Washing, No Sharing Food)

Activity: Discussion

Questions and Explanations:

- 1. Do people choose to have food allergies?**
 - a. Remind students that there are some things we can’t control. We are all different and that we never make fun or tease others.
 - b. No one knows why people have food allergies. There is no cure for them, which is why we all need to take them seriously and help others stay safe.
- 2. How would you feel if you were unable to eat one of your favourite foods?**
 - a. How would you feel at a birthday party if you were unable to eat the birthday cake?
- 3. What can we do at birthday parties or celebrations to make sure everybody is included?**
 - a. Try to invite everyone
 - b. Include everyone in games
 - c. Wash our hands
 - d. Not share food
- 4. Instead of having a celebration where everyone receives food, what could we give out instead?**
 - a. Ideas could be stickers, pencils etc.
 - b. Opportunity to remind about classroom celebration policies.

Topic 4: Hand-Washing - Glitter Experiment

Key Learning Points:

1. How, when and why we wash our hands.
2. Enforcing the routine and importance of washing hands before and after meals.

Suggested Materials:

- Glitter and a bowl of water
- Soap and hand sanitizer
- Paper towel
- Hand Washing Colouring Sheet

Activity: Demonstration with a few students in the front of the class

Questions and Explanations:

1. What do you think is better at getting rid of food off of our hands? Soap and water, or hand sanitizer?

Let's do an experiment to find out!

- Ask 4-6 volunteers come to the front of the class.
- Instruct them to cover one of their hands in glitter.
- Have all the volunteers shake each other's clean hand with a glitter-filled hand to emphasize that every time we shake hands, the glitter is passed on.
- Have a brainstorm session of what the glitter is representing (answer: dirt, germs or allergens).
- Now allow each student to dip their hands in the bowl of water, but not to use soap or allow them to dry their hands. Emphasize the importance of washing your hands properly by pointing out how not all the glitter is gone from the students' hands.
- Next, ask them to rub hand sanitizer on their hands to see that the glitter is still not gone.
- Now the students must wash their hands with soap and properly dry them with paper towel.
- The instructor should emphasize how now all the glitter is gone and thank the volunteers.

2. Why is it important that we wash our hands before and after meals?

- a. Our hands pick up dirt, germs and bacteria through the day, which we don't want transferred onto our food when we eat. We wash our hands after we eat, we do not want to get traces of our food everywhere.

Topic 5: Healthy Food Choices

Key Learning Points:

1. Understand how and what it means to maintain a well-balanced diet according to the Canada Food Guide.
2. The importance of all food groups.
3. How to make substitutions within the same food group if anyone is not able to eat a certain product in any food group.
4. Never share food.

Suggested Materials:

- [Canada Food Guide](#)
- Food Substitutes Worksheet
- What's Safe for Lunch Worksheet

Activity: Discussion

Questions and Explanations:

1. **Do you know what the four main food groups are?**
 - a. Introduce Canada's Food Guide and all four food groups.
 - b. Health Canada resources available at www.hc-sc.gc.ca
2. **Why is it important to eat a balanced diet from these four food groups?**
 - a. Discuss the importance of healthy eating and getting proper nutrition to help with growth, energy and overall health.
3. **What food groups would the following allergens be in?**
 - a. Peanuts (meats & alternatives)
 - b. Milk (milk & alternatives)
 - c. Fish (meats & alternatives)
 - d. Wheat (grain products)
4. **What should someone with food allergies do if they can't eat certain foods that are considered healthy?**
 - a. Find substitutes through the Canada Food Guide.
5. **Why is it important that we never share food?**
 - a. Remind students that although some foods are healthy and safe for some, they may not be for everyone. It's best to keep our food to ourselves. Remind students of the room(s) where food is permitted.

Topic 6: Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction

Key Learning Points:

- 1) Recognize the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- 2) Tell the teacher or an adult if you, or someone else is having an emergency.

Suggested Materials: Match the Symptoms

Activity: Discussion

Questions and Explanations:

- 1. Does anybody know what “symptoms” are?**
 - a. Symptoms are strange signs that we get on our bodies when we get sick.
 - b. That’s what happens to our bodies when we get a cold or the flu.
- 2. Are symptoms something we take seriously?**
 - a. It’s important to take notice if we ever feel strange or unwell. Imagine having trouble breathing. That can be quite scary and needs to be taken seriously.
- 3. What do we do if we ever feel funny, or see someone else with strange signs or symptoms? Who should we tell?**
 - a. Teachers, parents, nurses and generally adults who we can trust. It’s important to tell them that something is wrong and that you need help.
- 4. Without an adult around, what number would we call in an emergency?**
 - a. 911. What would you say on the phone?
 - i. My name is:
 - ii. My friend is having these symptoms:
 - iii. My location is:
 - iv. We need an ambulance.
- 5. What would happen if someone with food allergies ate something that they are allergic to?**
 - a. They would get very sick with different symptoms
 - i. Swelling and difficulty breathing
 - ii. Stomach cramps
 - iii. Hives/rashes (red blotches on the skin)
 - iv. Sneezing
 - v. Dizziness

- b. Where can these happen on the body?
 - c. Symptoms can be different in every reaction, which is why it's important to speak up and get help no matter what the symptom is.
- 6. How can we help prevent allergic reactions at school?**
- a. Allergic reactions are very serious and could send someone to the hospital. That is why we don't share food, we wash our hands and take food allergies seriously. If we ever see someone having symptoms, it's important to speak up and tell an adult immediately.

Topic 7: Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

Key Learning Points:

1. Introduction to auto-injectors and how they keep people safe.
2. Inclusiveness in the classroom.

Suggested Materials:

- Safety Equipment Worksheet

Activity: Show and Tell, Discussion

Questions and Explanations:

*Prior to activity ask any student with allergies if they would like to show and tell about their auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen[®]) with the class. Do not allow students to pass around.

- 1. Can you name any tools or devices that help keep you safe and protected?**
 - a. Introduce safety devices through the pictures on worksheet (e.g., seatbelt, helmets) and brainstorm why we use them.
- 2. Why do we use special gear or equipment in certain situations?**
 - a. Ask the students if they do any activities where they wear safety equipment.
- 3. Did you know people with food allergies have safety gear with them that can help them during an allergic reaction? In fact, we have students in our classroom with one.**
 - a. Show an epinephrine auto-injector and explain that it is a special medicine that can help make an allergic reaction go away.
 - b. Ask a student with allergies where they keep it.
- 4. Should we ever play with one of these if we ever found one?**
 - a. Explain that they are not toys. It is a very serious medicine that we should never play with or joke around about.
 - b. If someone used one, they would need to go to the hospital right away.
 - c. Remind students where they are kept in your classroom/school.
- 5. Is it okay to tease someone for having their medicine with them?**
 - a. We all have differences and different ways of staying healthy and safe. It is important to accept and support each other's differences, and never tease or make fun of each other.