

Manager's Corner

Food Allergies and Food Intolerances

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The University of Mississippi

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PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Professional Standards

FOOD SAFETY AND HACCP TRAINING – 2600

Employee will be able to effectively utilize all food safety program guidelines and health department regulations to ensure optimal food safety.

2620 - Food Safety - General

2630 - Federal, State, and Local Food Safety Regulations

2640 - Food Safety Culture

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Food Allergies is designed for directors/managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This resource is part of a continuous set of training resources designed to give directors/managers an easy-to-use lesson plan for training staff in various food safety topics. *Manager's Corner: Food Allergies* provides a method for training using many of the Institute of Child Nutrition's food safety resources. Every lesson plan contains the following:

- learning objective,
- statement explaining the importance of the topic,
- list of materials,
- instructions on how to present the information,
- questions to ask staff, and
- additional resources to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the director/manager.

All materials including videos can be found on the ICN website at www.theicn.org.

Landing pages for materials listed in *Manager's Corner*:

- CDC Food Allergy Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/>
- Food Allergy Research and Education: <https://www.foodallergy.org/>
- HACCP-based Standard Operating Procedures: www.theicn.org/foodsafety
- ICN Food Allergies Resources: www.theicn.org/foodsafety
- USDA Food Allergy Resource: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/2017-edition-accommodating-children-disabilities-school-meal-programs>

Food Allergies and Food Intolerances

Objective: Discuss food allergies and food intolerances.

Why it is important: School nutrition employees need to understand food allergies and food intolerances because they can be disabilities. Disabilities must be accommodated by school nutrition programs, and food must be safely provided to children with food-related disabilities.

Materials:

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Food Allergy and Food Intolerance Fact Sheet
- Food Allergy vs Food Intolerance Possible Answers

Instructions:

Review the Food Allergy and Food Intolerance Fact Sheet. Use the fact sheet to discuss the difference between food allergy and food intolerance, their symptoms, prevention, treatment, etc.

Ask provided questions. On a piece of flip chart paper, draw two overlapping circles on the flip chart (Venn Diagram). Label one circle "Food Allergy" and the other "Food Intolerance". Ask staff to provide answers as you write their differences in their specific circles, and write what they have in common where the circles overlap. Use the Food Allergy vs. Food Intolerance Possible Answers handout for assistance. Answer all staff questions when done.

Questions for the staff:

- What is a food allergy?
 - **An immune-mediated adverse reaction to a food protein that could cause a life threatening response.**
- What is a food intolerance?
 - **An abnormal response to eating; not life-threatening and does not involve the body's immune system.**
- What are some food allergies or intolerances you have heard of?
 - **Food allergies: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, etc.**
 - **Food intolerances: gluten, monosodium glutamate (MSG), lactose, etc.**

Additional Resources:

- Food Allergy Fact Sheets: www.theicn.org/foodsafety
 - Overview of Food Allergies
 - Common Questions School Nutrition Directors
 - Common Questions School Nutrition Staff
- Food Allergies in School (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/>)

Food Allergy and Food Intolerance Fact Sheet

What is a food allergy?

An immune-mediated adverse reaction to a food protein that could cause a life threatening response. In allergic individuals, certain foods can trigger the immune system to develop an antibody against the allergen (food protein). Every time that person consumes that allergen, it triggers a variety of allergic symptoms. Even a bite of food can result in an allergic reaction.

What are common food allergens?

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (e.g. walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, and pecans)
- Wheat
- Soy
- Fish
- Crustacean shellfish (e.g. shrimp, lobster, and crab)

What is a food intolerance?

An abnormal response to a food which usually involves the gastrointestinal system but not the immune system. Eliminating the food will eliminate the symptoms. The treatment is determined between the state licensed healthcare professional and the patient.

Food intolerances do not cause immediate life threatening reactions. However, food intolerances may still be considered a disability on a case by case basis by a state licensed healthcare professional, so you may have to make accommodations to school meals. Some children may be able to ingest some food related to their food intolerance, such as yogurt for a milk intolerance, but it is up to the state licensed healthcare professional to prescribe such allowances.

What are common food intolerances?

- Gluten
- Monosodium Glutamate (MsG)
- Lactose (aka milk intolerance)

What is celiac disease?

An immune reaction only in the small intestines caused by eating gluten. The adverse reaction occurs when someone with celiac disease eats gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye. Oats, although they do not naturally contain gluten, can sometimes be unsafe due to cross contact or cross pollination. There is no cure for celiac disease, so a strict gluten-free diet is followed to manage the symptoms and promote intestinal health.

Food Allergy vs Food Intolerance Possible Answers

Instructions: Please write in the circles where they overlap what food allergy and food intolerance have in common. List how they are different on their individual sides.

Food Allergy

vs.

Food Intolerance

- Could possibly be life threatening.
- Can cause anaphylaxis.
- Involves the immune system.
- Cannot ingest any of the allergen.
- Total avoidance of the known allergen.
- Requires epinephrine for treatment.
- Rapid onset.
- Create anti-bodies.

- Similar symptoms: nausea, diarrhea, and/or vomiting.
- Requires diet modification.
- Schools may be required to make reasonable accommodations if there is a diagnosed disability.

- Generally, is not life threatening.
- Involves the digestive system with the exception of Celiac disease which involves the digestive and immune system.
- May be able to ingest some versions of the food such as yogurt for lactose intolerance.
- Possible delayed onset.

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