

## **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS / STUDENTS WITH ANAPHYLAXIS**



Anaphylaxis - an allergic reaction that can cause death - is on the increase. Young children with anaphylaxis are now in Canadian schools, and they are children with unique and special needs.

Both the parents of such children, and the schools those children attend, have a responsibility to ensure that the schools provide a safe environment for these children. Parents must give their children basic knowledge about anaphylaxis; and they must provide the school with sufficient information to help ensure the child's safety. Schools must recognize the genuine seriousness of anaphylaxis, and must take appropriate steps.

A partial checklist of responsibilities and actions are provided below. Implemented conscientiously, these suggestions will help make the school experience safe and positive for both the child and the school.

1. Parents should teach their child with anaphylaxis that anaphylaxis is life-threatening and let the child know which allergens need to be avoided. In addition, the child must be prepared for an anaphylactic reaction and must know how to use either an EpiPen® or an Anakit®.
2. Avoidance is the key to prevention. Children with anaphylaxis must be taught not to take or exchange food with other children.
3. Parents should provide the child's school with a letter from the doctor (or allergist), if possible, confirming that the child has anaphylaxis.
4. At the start of each school year, parents should inform school authorities, both verbally and in writing, of their child's medical needs.
5. Parents should provide the school with emergency plans indicating what is necessary to the provision of a safe environment for their child.
6. Parents should provide two EpiPens®, if possible, (three in rural communities) or the equivalent in Anakits®, to be used in case of a medical emergency. (This needs to be assessed on an individual basis).
7. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide a safe carrying case for the EpiPen® or Anakit® to be worn on the child's person, such as a waist pouch.
8. Parents must ensure that any medication intended for the child has not reached its "best before" or expiry date.
9. Parents should visit the child's classroom, meet with the teacher and identify any health hazards in the classroom.

10. Parents and/or school staff should arrange to have a representative of the Allergy Asthma Information Association (AAIA) or the Public Health Nurse conduct an education inservice for all school employees, including support staff and bus drivers.
11. Parents and/or school authorities should ensure that all cafeteria employees are aware of the names of the allergic students and the allergens they are anaphylactic to educate cafeteria staff to the danger of cross-contamination, complete ingredient information should be available on request.

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