

Assumption Catholic School

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OFF TO SCHOOL SAFELY WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

A food allergy is the immune system's reaction to a certain food. Eight foods cause 90% of all food allergic reactions. They are milk, egg, wheat, peanut, soy, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish. There is no cure for food allergies. Strict avoidance (by reading ingredient listings all the time) is the only way to prevent a reaction. Children with asthma and food allergies are at higher risk for a severe reaction. Symptoms can include: vomiting, diarrhea, cramps, hives, swelling, eczema, itching or swelling of the lips, tongue or mouth, itching or tightness in the throat, difficulty breathing, or wheezing. Allergic symptoms can begin within minutes to 1 hour after ingesting the food. Milk is the most common cause of food allergies in children. Other foods most commonly cited are eggs, wheat, peanut, soy and tree nuts. Peanuts, nuts, fish, and shellfish commonly cause the most severe reactions. Up to 5 percent of children have food allergies. Most children outgrow their allergy, although an allergy to peanuts and tree nuts is considered life-long.

As little as 1/2 a peanut can cause a fatal reaction for severely allergic individuals. Some severely allergic children can have a reaction if milk is splashed on their skin. Being kissed by someone who has eaten peanuts for example, can cause a reaction to severely allergic individuals.

Anaphylaxis is a sudden, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. It can be caused by food allergy, insect stings, or medications. Although any food can potentially cause anaphylaxis, peanuts, nuts, shellfish, fish and eggs are foods that most commonly cause this reaction. As little as 1/5 of a teaspoon of the offending food has caused death. Symptoms can include hives, swelling (especially of the lips and face), difficulty breathing (either because of swelling in the throat or an asthmatic reaction), vomiting, diarrhea cramping, and a fall in blood pressure. They can occur in as little as 5 to 15 minutes.

For many parents, sending their child off to school for the first time brings mixed emotions. When that child has food allergies, the stress level grows dramatically.

At Assumption Catholic School we do have students who have severe allergies. In response to this the School Commission has agreed that we will ask that peanut butter be avoided in all treats sent to school. These include birthday, reception, and party treats. Students are told not to trade or give food to each other in response to this as well. This applies to grades preschool through grade eight. Please talk to your student about being sensitive to the medical needs of those around your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to the principal. Thank you for your kindness, cooperation, and sensitivity in this area.