

## Tip Sheets

### Food Allergies



A food allergy is the body's reaction to a food it mistakes for a harmful substance. Antibodies attack the supposed

invader, releasing chemicals that trigger an allergic reaction soon after the food is swallowed.

#### Common Reactions

Babies and toddlers are most likely affected because food allergies often develop early in life and decrease as the immune and digestive systems mature. Common reactions include:

- Skin: hives, rashes, eczema
- Digestive tract: vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps

#### Common Symptoms

Symptoms set in quickly—within a minute to an hour after eating a sensitive food—and generally disappear within 24 hours. Common symptoms of an allergic reaction include:

- Upset stomach
- Gas/bloating
- Abdominal cramps
- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Rashes
- Hives
- Eczema
- Wheezing
- Runny nose
- Stuffy nose
- Throat and/or tongue swelling

#### Most Common Allergen Causing Foods

- Cow's milk
- Eggs
- Soy
- Wheat
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts

#### Preventative Steps

- Keep classroom free of allergen food (i.e. peanut free table for eating, letter to parents requesting no allergen food brought to school).
- Check all food labels for food allergen. If no food label is present, individuals should not eat that food.
- Assure that all staff/families know of the child's allergen.

For more information, visit [www.inclusivechildcare.org](http://www.inclusivechildcare.org).

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