

Food Allergy Facts of Life

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Introduction

Living with food allergies is challenging, requiring adults to manage their health and avoid trigger foods, and parents to recognize symptoms and find helpful resources and professionals. It also means finding ways to manage you or your child's health and well-being without hardship, stress, or illness. Learning to recognize a food allergy or food sensitivity is as important as learning how to live with it.

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

- increase knowledge about food allergies and intolerances, and the differences between the two;
- become familiar with symptoms of food allergies and intolerances;
- learn the common sources of food allergies and intolerances;
- understand the importance of recognizing and treating a food allergy or intolerance;
- learn management of food allergies and intolerances; and
- learn about resources available to those who suffer from food allergies or intolerances.

Intended Audiences

- Parents of children who have food allergies or intolerances
- Family and Community Education (FCE) Units
- Church groups



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- Work groups and other community groups
- Day care and school personnel
- Senior citizen groups

Before the Lesson

- Review the leader's guide and fact sheet (MF3083) and the PowerPoint slideshow, if you plan to use it. (Download from the K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Science website, at www.ksre.ksu.edu/FCS/p.aspx?tabid=87).
- Obtain copies of fact sheet — *Food Allergy Facts of Life*, MF3083 — for each participant.
- Make copies of the participant survey to use at the end of the lesson.
- Review three or more of the websites listed under Reputable Resources.
- Gather materials or examples (downloaded from the website or listed in the supplemental materials) for each participant.
- Talk with someone who has a food allergy or intolerance to learn what living with the condition is like. Consider asking that person to come to your presentation and share his or her experiences.
- Review important terms.

Important Terms

Allergen (al-ler-gen) — a substance that's capable of producing an allergic reaction.

Anaphylaxis (an-a-fil-lax-is) — a serious, sometimes life-threatening, allergic reaction.

Epinephrine (ep-i-nef-fren) — a substance used to stop an anaphylactic reaction.

Food allergy — an immune system reaction that occurs soon after eating a certain food.

Food Allergy Action Plan — emergency care plan to be carried at all times.

Food intolerance — delayed response to a food that does not involve the immune system.

Histamine (hiss-ta-mean) — chemical released by antibodies that produces the itching or swelling associated with allergic reactions.

Immunoglobulin (im-mu-no-glob-u-lin) — antibodies that help fight infection in the body.



IgE (eye-gee-ee) — immune system antibodies found in the respiratory tract, intestines, skin, and other body organs.

Medical history — a review of past illnesses and issues.

RAST, radioallergosorbent test (ray-de-o aller-go sorb-ent test) — blood test used to diagnose presence of IgE antibodies.

Skin prick test — an allergy test that involves putting a small amount of allergen on a probe with a sharp tip and pricking the skin with it.

Three R's — **R**ecognize the symptoms, **R**eact quickly, and **R**eview what caused the reaction and how well the action plan worked.

Introduction Suggestions

If you or someone you know has a food allergy or food intolerance, invite them to the presentation to share their experience. This can help the audience identify with the issues involved with food allergies and help them understand how allergies affect lives. Allow time for discussion about the audience's own experiences with food allergies or intolerances.

Supplemental Materials

Each participant should receive a copy of the supplemental materials. Take time to review some of the more common names for food allergens.

PowerPoint

Use of the PowerPoint presentation is highly recommended. Ask your county or district K-State Research and Extension office for use of a projector and computer if you do not have one available to you.

Reputable Resources

The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network. *www.foodallergy.org*. A great resource for learning all you can about food allergies.

Kids with Food Allergies. *kidswithfoodallergies.org*. Site dedicated to children's food allergies. Has printable resources, recipes, online chat rooms, and activities.

The American College of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology. *www.acaai.org*. Site with information about food allergies, references to help you find an allergist, and more.

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. *www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/foodallergy/Pages/default.aspx*. Website with information about food allergies, including frequently asked questions and more.

Food Allergies and Food Intolerance — The Complete Guide to Their Identification and Treatment. Jonathon Brostoff, M.D., Linda Gamlin, Healing Arts Press, 2000. ISBN: 13:978-089281875-4.

Food Allergies for Dummies. Robert A. Wood, M.D. Wiley Publishing, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-470-09584-3.

Understanding and Managing Your Child's Food Allergies. Scott H. Sicherer, M.D., The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. ISBN: 13:978-0-8018-8492-4.

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