

November 2018

## A Resource Guide for Going to School with Food Allergies

### For parents and students

If your child is due to start school next year, changing to a new school, or returning but to a new class and teachers, here are a few resources to help with your preparations. Links to all these can be found on the Allergy New Zealand website, [www.allergy.org.nz](http://www.allergy.org.nz) but other links are provided below:

- i) Make sure your child's Anaphylaxis Action Plan is up-to-date. Action plans are available on the ASCIA (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology & Allergy) website:

<https://www.allergy.org.au/>

Your doctor will need to update the plan and sign it. Attach your child's photo. You will need to provide a copy to the school – they may be able to help you with this.

- ii) If your child will be a new entrant, it helps if they know what the food they are allergic to looks like, and what to do if they have a reaction. Starship Children's Hospital has developed a guide for 'starting school with food allergies', listing 5 skills it would be useful for your 5 year-old to have.

<https://www.starship.org.nz/media/455294/going-to-school-with-food-allergies.pdf>

- iii) Check the expiry date on your child's EpiPen<sup>®</sup>, and purchase a new one if needed for the new school year. Register with [www.epiclub.co.nz](http://www.epiclub.co.nz) and receive a free training kit including EpiPen<sup>®</sup> trainer. The EpiPen<sup>®</sup> will need to be placed in a container with the child's name clearly labelled, a copy of the Action Plan and other prescribed medication, to give to the school to hold. Alternatively, if your child is old enough and able to carry their EpiPen on them, they will need a pouch or other container. Star Allergy Alert pouches are available from Allergy New Zealand's Shop Online: [www.allergy.org.nz](http://www.allergy.org.nz)

Arrange an appointment with the school principal or their deputy to discuss the school's policies and procedures for managing food allergies and/or to update the plan for your child for 2018. Check to see school staff and particularly your child's teacher have had training on managing anaphylaxis, that everyone will know where the EpiPen<sup>®</sup> is stored, and what to do in case of anaphylaxis. The 'Allergy and Anaphylaxis Guidelines for Early Childhood Services and Schools', which can be downloaded from [www.allergy.org.nz/shop/Education+sector.html](http://www.allergy.org.nz/shop/Education+sector.html), can help you with this.

- iv) Arrange to meet with your child's teacher, and discuss how to minimise risk in the classroom as well as on school grounds and off-site activities. ASCIA's 'Risk Minimisation Strategies' is a great resource:  
[https://www.allergy.org.au/images/scc/ASCIA\\_Risk\\_minimisation\\_strategies\\_table\\_030\\_315.pdf](https://www.allergy.org.au/images/scc/ASCIA_Risk_minimisation_strategies_table_030_315.pdf)
- v) Do the free online training provided by ASCIA and recommend this to family and friends:  
<https://www.allergy.org.au/patients/anaphylaxis-e-training-schools-and-childcare>
- vi) For teens and young adults, there is a great interactive website developed by young Australians with funding through the National Allergy Strategy. Go to  
[www.250k.org.au/](http://www.250k.org.au/)
- vii) It is also recommended those living with food allergies subscribe to the MPI Food Safety website to receive notifications of food recalls. Go to:  
<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/subscribe-to-mpi/>

**For schools:**

- i) Check the resource list above – some of these will also be helpful to you. In general, the two main sites to refer to are:
  - Allergy New Zealand: [www.allergy.org.nz/shop/Education+sector.html](http://www.allergy.org.nz/shop/Education+sector.html)
  - ASCIA (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology & Allergy)  
<https://www.allergy.org.au/schools-childcare>
- ii) Schools can register with [www.epiclub.co.nz](http://www.epiclub.co.nz) to receive a free educational kit including an EpiPen® training device.
- iii) The ASCIA site (above) also has a link to slide sets, one for primary and one for secondary school, which can be shown to students to raise awareness of food allergies and anaphylaxis. These were developed in conjunction with the 250k project.  
<https://www.allergy.org.au/schools-childcare#slides>

Allergy New Zealand also provides an information service and can be contacted by parents or schools on 0800 34 0800, or email [allergy@allergy.org.nz](mailto:allergy@allergy.org.nz)

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