CHILD CARE PREPARED… for FOOD ALLERGY

INFORMATION FOR THE LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Provide a supportive and attentive environment for the young child with food allergies. Allergy symptoms may come on suddenly and unexpectedly. Adults caring for the young child with severe allergy must recognize and quickly respond to signs of breathing trouble or other signs of reaction.

Identify and train all staff members who have responsibility for the child with food allergy. Include drivers and helpers as appropriate in your child care setting. Having a written food allergy action plan for the child, completed with information from parent and medical provider, will help guide what staff must know and do to help the young child with a reaction.

All personnel caring for the young child with allergies must be prepared to recognize and respond to breathing emergencies; know the appropriate actions to take if the child has breathing difficulties; and know how to safely and correctly give medications.

Encourage parents to keep you updated with current emergency contact information in case their child has an emergency while in child care. Remind parents of this on a regular basis.

Keep all medication products locked when not in use, and safely out of the reach of children. Periodically review how to hold and use an epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen® or Twinject® for example), so as to be calm and confident if one is needed.

Identify the food alternatives that will be offered the child with allergy in order to keep them included in activities in the child care setting. Post this information where staff can see and where foods are served.

Make sure emergency contact information and medication go on outings with the child as well as cell phone or other means of calling for help. If a child is too young to have language skills to clearly state he or she has an allergy, recommend to the parent to have the child wear a medical identification bracelet when away from home and parent.

Talk with parents regularly about any changes in the child's condition or treatment plan. Make sure all medications have not expired. Encourage parents to notify the child's physician if reactions occur.

Children with severe allergy may feel vulnerable or anxious about possible exposures to allergens. Children can learn to manage their safety and self-care. Young children can learn to state clearly the foods that can be harmful; to tell an adult when a reaction is starting; and to use their own epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen®). Independence and confidence emerge over time, and vary by child.

Be prepared to call 911 if the child fails to get relief from medication, becomes unresponsive, stops breathing, or symptoms are rapidly getting worse.

Respect the privacy of children and their families. Do not inappropriately discuss individual children's needs. Discuss with parents first the information that might be shared with other families about food allergy issues at the child care facility.

FOOD ALLERGY RESOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED AND FREE:

Allergy and Asthma Network/ Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc.
www.aanma.org

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network:
http://www.foodallergy.org/
http://www.foodallergy.org/section/schoolchildcare
Find a sample care plan:
http://www.foodallergy.org/files/FAAP.pdf

Healthy Child Care:
http://www.healthychild.net/NutritionAction.php?article_id=507

Managing Life-threatening Food Allergies in Childcare: a Guide for Parents:
http://www.asthmaandallergies.org/Articles/Food%20Allergies/How%20to%20Manage%20Life-Threatening%20Food%20Allergies%20in%20Child%20Care.htm

Responding to Life Threatening Allergic Reactions in the Child Care Setting:
http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/healthandsafety/life_threat_allergEN0908.pdf

Health and Safety Notes on Allergies:
http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/healthandsafety/AllergiesEN_091907.pdf

Nebraska Early Childhood Training Center:
http://www.education.ne.gov/oec/ectc.html

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education:
http://nrckids.org/
Caring for Our Children, 3rd Ed.
http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/index.html/
See Standard 4.3.0.8: Feeding Plans and Dietary Modifications;
Standard 5.7.0.3 Removal of Allergen Triggering Materials from Outdoor Areas;
Standard 4.2.0.9 Written Menus and Introduction of New Foods;
Standard 4.2.0.10 Care for Children with Food Allergies.

American Academy of Pediatrics:
http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/asthma.cfm

www.healthychildcare.org

Acknowledgement: Child Care Prepared…for Food Allergy was developed with contributions from the Together for Kids and Families Child Care Health Consultation Workgroup.
www.dhhs.ne.gov/TogetherKidsFamilies
and
http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/lifespanhealth_childcarehealthconsultation.aspx