

Food Allergies vs. Food Intolerances

There are 8 foods that account for 90% of total food allergies:

Peanuts	Tree nuts	Eggs	Milk
Soy	Wheat	Fish	Shellfish

Food Allergy—A food allergy involves the immune system and the reaction can be mild to severe. The best treatment for a food allergy is strict avoidance of the allergen (food). In some cases a sudden, severe and potentially fatal reaction called anaphylaxis can occur. This type of food allergy is **life threatening**. Early administration of epinephrine is crucial to successfully treating anaphylactic reactions.

Food Intolerance is a reaction to food that is **non-life threatening**. Sometimes the symptoms can be the same as food allergies but food intolerances are more common than food allergies.

What Can You Do?

If a child has a **life threatening food allergy** you must have a medical statement from a licensed physician on file. It must include the food(s) to be omitted from the diet and the choice of foods that must be substituted. You are required to provide special meals to children with a life threatening food allergy.

If a child has a **non-life threatening food allergy and/or intolerance** you must have a statement from a recognized medical authority that includes the food(s) to be omitted and the foods that can be substituted. You are encouraged to provide special meals to children with non-life threatening food allergies or intolerances. Recognized medical authorities include: physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner (ARNP) or registered dietitian.

Medical statements **must** be kept on file at the child care facility where the child is served. Use of the "Medical Statement for Children with Disabilities and Special Dietary Conditions" located on the CCFP website is encouraged.

Food Allergy Symptoms

- **Skin** (hives, swelling, itchiness, warmth, redness, rash)
- **Breathing** (wheezing, shortness of breath, throat tightness, cough, hoarse voice, trouble swallowing)
- **Stomach** (nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, itchy mouth/throat)
- **Circulation** (pale/blue color, poor pulse, passing-out, dizzy/lightheaded, low blood pressure, shock)
- **Other** (anxiety, red/itchy/watery eyes, headache, cramping)

Learn More...

Visit our website at www.doh.state.fl.us/ccfp/, click on Infant and Child Nutrition for resources including:

- Accommodating Children With Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs
- Nutrition for Children with Health Care Needs
- Nutrition and Menu Planning for Children in the CCFP workbook

Also visit the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network website at www.foodallergy.org