

Allergy Aware Resources for School Communities

[Anaphylaxis](#) is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. In BC, all school boards are required to establish policies, procedures and training strategies in accordance with the [Anaphylaxis Protection Order](#) and the [BC Anaphylactic and Child Safety Framework](#).

Roles and Responsibilities in Anaphylaxis Prevention and Management

The prevention and management of anaphylaxis is a shared responsibility:

- **School board** anaphylaxis policies must include allergy awareness, prevention and avoidance strategies, staff training, communication strategies, and emergency protocols for each identified student with anaphylaxis.
- **All school staff**, including teachers, teachers on call, food services staff, coaches and bus drivers, should be aware of students at risk for anaphylaxis, be prepared to treat students as per their emergency plans, and complete annual [anaphylaxis training](#).
- **Parents** must communicate with the school about their child's allergies, collaborate with a physician and school personnel to develop an individualized written emergency plan, provide current epinephrine auto-injectors, and liaise as needed regarding foods sent to school, school food services, field trips and special occasions. Parents must educate their allergic children on how to protect themselves and to use appropriate avoidance strategies (such as washing hands before eating, not sharing food or utensils).
- **Secondary students** are encouraged to take on primary responsibility for managing their allergies.
- **All students** should be taught about anaphylaxis and how to help their peers.
- It is helpful for the **entire school community** to ensure students at risk for anaphylaxis are supported.

School Environments



- "Schools can be expected to create an 'allergy-safe' or 'allergy-aware' environment. It is unrealistic, however, to expect an 'allergen-free' environment."¹
- Schools and parents should work together to develop realistic strategies. "Measures can reduce the risk of accidental exposure without imposing unenforceable or unrealistic rules on the rest of the student body."¹
- Although some schools aim to keep peanuts/nuts out of the school, this restricts the intake for other students, especially vegetarian students who may rely on peanuts/nuts for protein. Many schools provide designated 'allergy-aware' eating areas and some have specific rules about allergens.
- Food restrictions alone are inadequate. Education, awareness and training are required to minimize risk of exposure and to respond effectively in an emergency.

Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

- Epinephrine is the treatment for anaphylaxis. Epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPen®) should be labelled with the child's name, expiry date, and be kept in an easily accessible, unlocked location.
- Children at risk of anaphylaxis should carry their auto-injector with them at all times when they are mature enough to do so (generally 6 or 7 years old). A back-up auto-injector is recommended, as some children will require 2 doses, as it is recommended to give a second dose of epinephrine as early as 5 minutes after the first dose if there is no improvement in symptoms (this may vary with school district policy).
- All school staff should be aware of those students at risk for anaphylaxis and be prepared to treat them as per their emergency plans.
- EpiPen® instructions and resources including a short video: www.epipen.ca

Allergy Aware Resources for School Communities

Free, Online Training

- Available at www.allergyaware.ca
 - **Anaphylaxis in Schools** (30 minutes); Ministry of Education requests that school staff complete training annually
 - **Anaphylaxis in the Community** (30 minutes)
 - **Anaphylaxis in Child Care Settings** (30 minutes)



More Resources

- [HealthLink BC Severe Allergic Reaction \(Anaphylaxis\)](#) (8 languages)
- [BC Ministry of Education Anaphylaxis Resources](#)
- [Food Allergy Canada](#) (videos, posters, teacher resources and more)
- [Food Allergy Canada Back to School Allergy Checklist](#)
- [Food Allergy Canada Why Risk It? App](#)
- Government of Canada [Common Food Allergens](#) and [Allergen Labelling](#)
- [Medic Alert Foundation Canada](#) (bracelets, etc.)
- [Peanut-free Lunches and Snacks](#) Dietitians of Canada
- [Allergic Reactions Poster](#)
- HealthLink BC Nurse, Pharmacist or Dietitian: Call 8-1-1 (24/7) or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca



References and Guiding Documents

1. Anaphylaxis in Schools and Other Settings (English and French) FoodAllergyCanada.ca/resources/national-guidelines
2. BC Ministry of Education [Anaphylaxis Protection Order](#)
3. BC Ministry of Education [Anaphylactic and Child Safety Framework](#)



Looking for more information or support?

Contact your local Island Health Healthy Schools Team at your local [Public Health Unit](#) (call toll-free 1-877-370-8699 and ask to be connected).

