

Special Needs Activities for Children

Helping Children Understand Food Allergies

Purpose

- To help children understand food allergies
- To help children learn to avoid cross-contact with food

What to do ahead of time

Gather any props desired for the lesson, such as a plate, spoon, fork, and cup used at mealtime, food models, and a children's book on food allergies (see the recommended list at the end of this activity).

Activity

DO: Gather the children in a semi-circle seated on the floor or in your regular reading setting.

ASK the children: Does any one know what an allergy is?

DO: Allow time for all answers.

SAY: An allergy is when touching or eating something makes a person feel sick. An allergy can cause

- a person's skin or throat to itch.
- a person's tummy to ache.

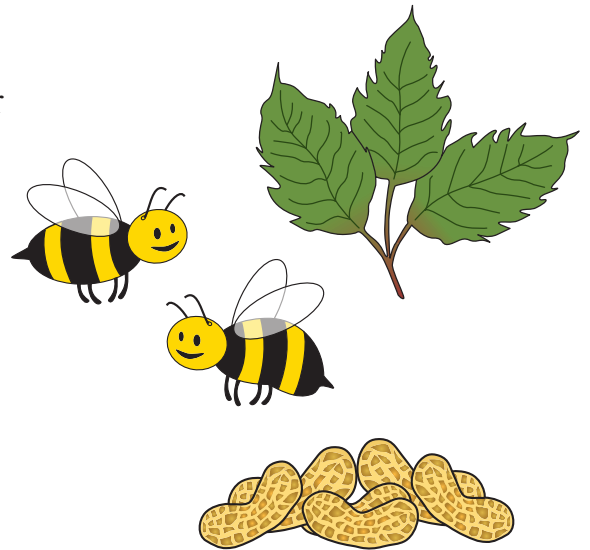


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- a person to have a hard time breathing.
- a person to have red blotches or bumps on their skin.

Some people are allergic to plants like poison ivy that make little blisters come up on their skin. Some people are allergic to bee stings. Some people are allergic to the dust in the air they breathe, and some people are allergic to certain foods.



When a person has a food allergy, eating a food that most people can eat causes them to feel sick.

If a person has an allergy to a food, they must not eat that food. Staying away from that food is the only way the person with a food allergy can prevent sickness.

ASK: What are some ways we can help our friends who have food allergies?

Allow the children to come up with ideas or suggestions.

Here are some points to make:

- Food allergies are serious. Don't make jokes about them.
- Don't share food with friends who have food allergies. Eating food from someone else's plate could make the person feel sick. The place to share is the play area.
- Wash your hands after eating.
- Ask what your friends are allergic to and help them avoid it.
- If a friend who has food allergies becomes ill, get help immediately! Get the teacher as fast as you can.

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DO: Conclude the lesson by reading a children's book about allergies.

Suggested Reading List

Allie the Allergic Elephant: A Children's Story of Peanut Allergies by Nicole Smith, Illustrations by Maggie Nichols. Published by Allergic Child Publishing Group ISBN: 978-1-58628-053-6 ISBN: 1-58628-053-8

Cody the Allergic Cow: A Children's Story of Milk Allergies by Nicole Smith, Illustrations by Maggie Nichols. Published by Jungle Communications, Inc. ISBN: 1-58628-051-1

Chad the Allergic Chipmunk: A Children's Story of Nut Allergies by Nicole Smith, Illustrations by Maggie Nichols. Published by Allergic Child Publishing Group ISBN-13: 978-1-58628-054-3 ISBN-10: 1-58628-054-6

Find more ideas for children's books about allergies on the Kids With Food Allergies Website: www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/books-child.html.

Sources:

The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network. (2010). *Be a PAL: Alexander the Elephant*. Author. Retrieved May 13, 2010, from www.foodallergy.org/section/helpful-information.