

Children with Food Allergies

About 1 in 13 kids have a food allergy. An allergic reaction occurs when the body's immune system overacts to a food protein (an allergen). The most common food allergens are: peanuts, tree nuts, sesame seeds, soy, seafood (fish and shellfish), wheat, eggs, milk, mustard and sulphites. Symptoms of allergic reactions can be different for everyone and may occur within minutes or hours. The most common symptoms of allergies are:

- Flushed or pale face, hives, rash, itchy skin
- Swelling of the eyes, face, lips, throat or tongue
- Coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath
- Stomach pain, diarrhea, vomiting
- Feeling anxious, weak, dizzy or faint

Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) to food can be life threatening and occur quickly and without warning. These reactions can be treated with an epinephrine auto injector; an EpiPen®. The only way to prevent allergic reactions is to avoid contact with the foods or ingredients that cause them. As many children have food allergies, the majority of schools have adopted guidelines to help keep all students safe. Some of these guidelines may include:

1. No sharing of food or treats.
2. Washing hands with soap and water before and after eating.
3. No homemade treats for celebrations or special events. Cross-contamination is always possible.
4. Restricting the allergens from the classroom/school.

Food allergies are a serious medical condition, not a choice. Help prevent exposure to allergens by following your school's guidelines for food allergies. Take time to explain food allergies to your child and encourage them to learn about allergies that their classmates may have. If you are unsure of what to do, talk to the other child's parents or teacher. Students, parents, teachers and other staff all have an important role in keeping students safe, healthy and happy. To learn more about allergies, visit: www.anaphylaxis.ca or www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/allerg/fa-aa/index-eng.php



Children and Video Games

Research has shown that playing video games (or "gaming") can affect children in both good and bad ways. Playing certain video games can help children develop language, thinking and fine motor skills as well as cope with anger and stress. However, gaming can also result in lower grades and reduce time spent with friends and family. Video game play takes away from other healthy activities and some games may encourage children to act aggressively. It is up to parents to help their child learn to enjoy video games in a safe way. The following questions will help parents decide whether video games are a problem for their child:

- Is he/she playing too much? Do video games interfere with important tasks like chores, school work or family time? Too much gaming can take away from sports, hobbies, sleep and other healthy activities.
- Does the game fit with the household norms or values? Games that include aggression, bullying, violence and discrimination can influence a child's developing beliefs.

Making and enforcing rules about video game play with young children will help them avoid problems with gaming in the future. Here are some ways in which parents can teach their children to play video games appropriately:

- Make sure **play comes AFTER important tasks** like chores, school work, meals and family time.
- Ensure play happens in a central location, not a bedroom, so it can be **monitored**.
- Make sure **children do not play games intended for teens or adults**.
- Set and enforce a **time limit on play**.
- **Play together**. Playing video games as a family can be fun and allows parents to model appropriate behaviour and monitor play.
- Balance video game time with **other fun family activities**. Invite your child to go for a walk, play a game or do a puzzle together.