

# Food Allergy Awareness

What are food allergies?

Who has food allergies?

How can you help people with food allergies?

Food Allergy Research & Education  
(FARE)





# Food Allergy is a Serious Public Health Issue

**15 million**

Americans with food allergies





Includes

**5.9 million**

kids under 18 years old (1 in 13)





# What is a food allergy?

- The role of the immune system is to protect the body from germs and disease.
- A food allergy is an overreaction by the immune system to a food protein.
- When the food is eaten, the immune system thinks the food is harmful and releases histamine and other chemicals to “attack” the enemy.



# What foods cause allergic reactions?

People can be allergic to almost any food, but most food allergy reactions are caused by 8 foods:

**1. Peanuts**

**2. Tree Nuts**

**3. Eggs**

**4. Milk**

**5. Wheat**

**6. Fish**

**7. Soy**

**8. Shellfish**



# Food Allergies Can Be Life-Threatening

- Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that comes on quickly and may cause death
- Every 3 minutes a food allergy reaction sends someone to the ER
- Past reactions do not predict future reactions – so it is important to be prepared with an epinephrine auto-injector, if prescribed





# Many Have Already Experienced Severe Reactions



**40%**  
**of children**

with food allergies have experienced  
a severe or life-threatening reaction



# Can doctors cure food allergies?

- There is no cure for food allergies.
- Researchers are working to find a cause and cure.
- Currently the only way to avoid a reaction is avoiding the problem food.





# How can I look out for friends with food allergies?

1. Know that food allergies are very serious.
2. Don't share food with friends who have food allergies.
3. Wash hands after eating.
4. Help all of your friends and classmates have fun together!
5. If a friend with food allergies feels sick, get help right away!



# What would you do?

- Your friend, Stephen, has a food allergy.
- As you and Stephen walk out of the cafeteria, he says his stomach hurts.
- You ask him to hang out, but he says he wants to lie down.
- He says it feels like there is something stuck in his throat.



## You should...

- **Get an adult right away or dial 911!**





## What Would You Do?

- You and Stephen are playing with another friend, Max.
- Max offers Stephen a cookie from his backpack.
- Stephen says “No thank you, I have a food allergy.”
- Max says, “Come on and have some, it’s probably OK.”

## You should...

- Tell Max that even one bite of the wrong food could make Stephen sick.
- Wait to have snacks until later, so Stephen can have a snack that is safe for him.



# What would you do?

- A friend on your baseball team is allergic to milk and peanuts.
- Before practice, you ate peanut butter toast and drank a glass of milk.



## You should...

Wash your hands and face with soap and water before leaving for practice.

Note: hand sanitizer does not remove the allergen.





**Learn More and Get Involved!**

[www.foodallergy.org/teens](http://www.foodallergy.org/teens)

[foodallergyteens.tumblr.com](http://foodallergyteens.tumblr.com)