

WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is an acute, severe, allergic reaction requiring immediate medical attention. It usually occurs within seconds or minutes of exposure to a certain food or substance, but on rare occasions may happen after a few hours.

Common triggers include peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, eggs, cow's milk, fish, certain fruit and also penicillin, latex and the venom of stinging insects (such as bees, wasps or hornets).

The most severe form of allergic reaction is anaphylactic shock when the blood pressure falls dramatically and the patient loses consciousness. Fortunately, this is rare among young children. More commonly among children there may be swelling in the mouth and throat which can restrict the air supply, or severe asthma. Any symptoms which affect the breathing are serious.

Less severe symptoms may include tingling or itching in the mouth, hives anywhere on the body, generalised flushing of the skin or abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting however these may herald the start of more severe reactions.

Medicine and Control

The treatment for a severe allergic reaction is an injection of adrenalin (also known as epinephrine.) Pre-loaded injecting devices containing one measured dose of adrenaline are available on prescription.

Parents must inform the school in writing if their child has any known allergies and for whom such medication is required.

A care plan for any such child will be completed and agreed. Parents will be asked to meet with senior staff to discuss medication and care.

No less than 2 adrenaline devices will be required to be kept on the premises at school at all times and these must be replaced regularly. Medication will also accompany any such child on any outings away from school.

Should a severe allergic reaction occur, the adrenaline injection will be administered into the outer thigh and an ambulance will always be called.

All WMS staff are trained annually on the correct use of adrenaline injections. Such training is carried out by a suitably qualified medical professional.

Staff that are susceptible to severe anaphylaxis should ensure that they carry their own epipen and that in addition one is held in the school office.

Day to day measures are needed for food management and awareness of a child's needs in relation to food at the school and it is vital that we are fully informed of particular requirements. We are a 'nut-free' school and children are requested not to bring in any nuts or nut products.

Children who are at risk of severe allergic reactions are not ill in the usual sense. They will become very unwell if exposed to an allergen. At WMS we aim to ensure that children are not made to feel different through their allergies and we work with children and parents on this matter.

We also recognise that it is important to allay parent's fears by reassuring them that prompt and efficient action by staff will be taken in accordance with medical advice and the care plan.

Anaphylaxis is serious but manageable with sound precautionary measures and training and good procedures in place.

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