

CDC Releases Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools

Source: GlutenFree.com Editorial Staff | April 2014 | 5 min read

The prevalence of food allergies in children increased 18% from 1997 to 2007, and almost nine out of ten schools had at least one student with a food allergy in 2006, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Eight main foods account for 90% of these food allergens, and wheat is one of them. Wheat can be an especially challenging allergen to avoid because, according to the National Wheat Growers Association, 75% of all grain products in the United States are made from wheat flour.

To address the needs and health of children with food allergies, the CDC released the [*Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Centers*](#) at the end of October 2013 in response to the 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act. These guidelines were developed through consultation with the U.S. Department of Education as well as several other federal agencies. They provide information and specific, applicable tips that can be used to either create or strengthen Food Allergy Management Prevention Plans in educational programs. The guidelines are closely aligned with and complement guidelines for protecting students with [chronic illnesses](#), [asthma](#) and [diabetes](#).

The guidelines emphasize the following five priority areas should be addressed in efforts to protect students with food allergies:

1. Ensure the daily management of food allergies in individual children.
2. Prepare for food allergy emergencies.
3. Provide professional development on food allergies for staff members.
4. Educate children and family members about food allergies.
5. Create and maintain a healthy and safe educational environment.

Tangible recommendations for putting the guidelines into practice in each priority area are provided for all stakeholders, including school district superintendent, district foodservice director and foodservice managers, school administrators, school registered nurses, teachers and facilities/maintenance staff.

While not mandatory, these guidelines are designed to protect the health and safety of children with food allergies as well as ensure they are in a learning environment in which they can thrive.

Sources:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
[American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology](#)