



Reducing allergens in schools

Avoiding known allergens helps to prevent anaphylaxis. Schools can use a range of strategies to reduce risks. The strategies will be different in different places and situations.

It is not possible to completely remove any allergen (for example insects, peanuts, egg) from schools.

Food bans

Schools must not ban food substances. Schools must not claim that the school, any part of the school, or a school event is allergen or nut free.

Food bans or attempts to eliminate food allergens in schools are not appropriate because:

- food bans may give parents/carers, students and others a false sense of security, and lead to other risk management strategies not being followed through
- students can be at risk of anaphylaxis from many foods, insect stings or bites. It is not possible or practical to ban all food or insect allergens from a school
- it is more important for schools to implement a range of age appropriate strategies and consider students' needs when planning activities to reduce risk.

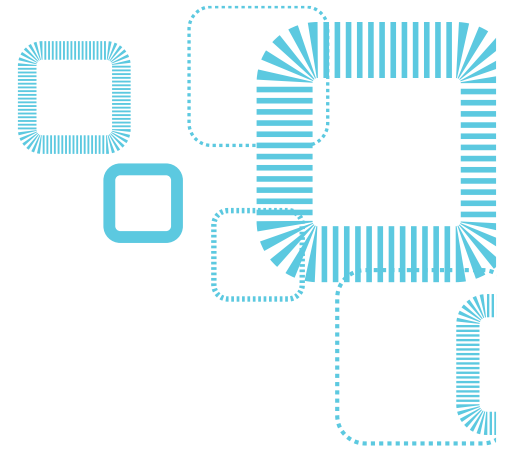
Reducing food allergens

Reducing common or identified food allergens (such as nuts) helps to reduce the risk of accidental exposure. This might be more important for students who cannot avoid contact with allergens themselves.

The principal may request that parents and staff (across the whole or part of their school) support the school's efforts to reduce identified allergens by asking parents not to send certain products to school in lunch boxes, and to talk to their children about not sharing their food. This is not the same as banning the food. These requests cannot be enforced and do not guarantee an allergen free environment. For this reason, requests are used as part of a plan that has several strategies.

Other strategies that can help to reduce the chance of a student at risk of anaphylaxis coming into contact with their allergens include:

- supervising meals and snacks
- not sharing food
- ensuring everyone (all students, staff and visitors) wash their hands properly with soap and water after eating. Using hand sanitiser does not remove traces of allergens from hands
- cleaning desks and tables where food is eaten or prepared
- not selling products that contain identified allergens from the tuckshop or through fundraising activities



Fact sheet

- talking with food service providers about the ingredients and foods supplied for camps
- not using some foods and empty food containers in cooking classes, science experiments, crafts and other school activities
- allowing students at risk of anaphylaxis to avoid activities that place them at risk of accidental exposure e.g. picking up litter, emptying rubbish bins, garden duties, washing dishes. The student can do a different activity instead
- educating students and other school community members about allergy.

Students at risk of anaphylaxis must not be separated from other students as a risk management strategy. This may affect their wellbeing and opportunities to form friendships.

It is not appropriate to prevent another student from eating their meal or snack at school if the food contains, or is suspected of containing, an allergen.

The school can work with parents/carers and the student to develop and carry out a plan that respects the needs of everybody and contributes to a safe school environment.

Schools may use strategies that allow for a range of considerations such as the age and skills of students. There is no one rule that will work for every situation. The [Anaphylaxis guidelines for Queensland state schools](#) provide more information about managing the risk of anaphylaxis in schools.

