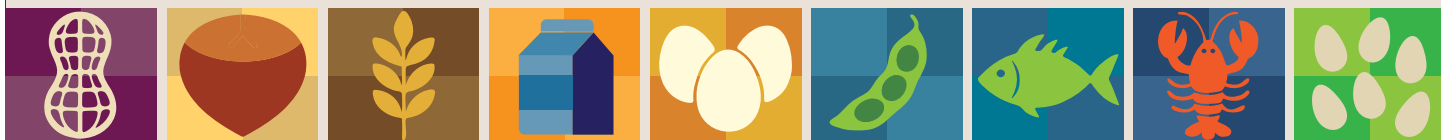




FARE
It's personal for us.

Be A Pal
Protect. Ask. Learn.



Food Allergy Awareness: Middle School

How can you be a good friend to someone with food allergies?

Facilitator Guide

Teachers, Nurses, School Administrators, Parents, Volunteers,
Student Leaders

SECTION — BEFORE YOU BEGIN

About This Guide

This guide walks any facilitator—a classroom teacher, school nurse, parent volunteer, or a student leader—through the Be a PAL: Food Allergy Awareness and Education presentation for middle school students. It pairs every slide with a plain-language description, ready-to-use scripting, and discussion questions that spark real conversation.

You don't need a medical background to lead this lesson. Read the slide, say it in your own words (or use the script as-is), and ask the discussion question before clicking to the answer.

Grade Level	Middle school students (recommended grades 6-8)
Time Needed	25–35 minutes, including discussion and the three practice scenarios
Group Size	Whole class, small group, or one-on-one
Materials	The Be a PAL slide deck and a way to display it (projector, smartboard, or tablet). No handouts required. Optional activities provided at the end of this guide.
Slide Count	30 slides, organized into short sections plus 3 practice scenarios

Tips for Every Kind of Facilitator

Teacher	Fold this into a health, advisory, or morning-meeting block. Use the scenario slides as a mini role-play. Consider inviting volunteers to read Petey's and Anna's lines out loud.
School Nurse	Share how your school helps keep students with food allergies safe, making the lesson relevant to your students.
Parent Volunteer	You don't need to be an expert. The script is written for you to read almost word-for-word.
Student Leaders	Keep it casual and peer-to-peer. Skip the citations slide, and feel free to shorten the statistics on slide 10 to just the classroom fact: “that is two kids in every classroom.”

HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE

Each section below mirrors the deck. The “Slide” column tells you where you are, “On the Screen” describes what the group sees, “Say This / Do This” gives you scripting you can read aloud or paraphrase, and “Spark Conversation” gives you a question to ask before moving on. Quoted lines are suggestions, not a mandatory script. Have fun with it and thank you for spreading awareness and education on food allergies.

SECTION 1 WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

Slide	On the Screen	Say This / Do This	Spark Conversation
1	Title slide: Be a PAL logo and the guiding question.	<i>Welcome the group. Say: "Today we are going to learn how to be a good friend — a PAL — to someone with a food allergy. A PAL usually means "friend," but for food allergy friends we say PAL stands for PROTECT. ASK. LEARN.</i>	What does it mean to be a good friend? Has anyone heard the word 'food allergy' before?
2	Student video	<i>"Let's hear directly from a student about what it is really like to live with food allergies." (Play the video.)</i>	What stood out to you from the video? What is one thing you learned about living with a food allergy?
3–4	Section divider, then: definition of a food allergy and why even a tiny bite matters.	<i>"A food allergy is when the body thinks that a food is dangerous and the body overreacts to try to protect you. So, the body is making a mistake. In a person with a peanut allergy, that person's body thinks peanuts are dangerous to them and starts to fight against the peanut"</i> <i>"Food allergies can start at any age — even with a food someone has eaten safely before."</i> <i>"A tiny bite can make someone sick, but there is medicine that can help."</i>	True or false: Someone must eat a whole peanut to have an allergic reaction. (Answer: FALSE, sometimes even small amounts of the allergen can be dangerous.) So, if a peanut isn't actually dangerous for most people, why do you think someone's body would act like it is? Answer: That is exactly it—it is not because the peanut is bad. The person's body is making a mistake and thinks the peanut is a dangerous germ or invader it must fight. That is what a food allergy is. A good transition: Can anyone name a food that some people might be allergic to?" (Let students shout out answers)

SECTION 2 THE MOST COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS

Slide	On the Screen	Say This / Do This	Spark Conversation
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5–6

The nine most common food allergens in the U.S. with icons (milk, egg, peanut, tree nut, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, sesame).

“These nine foods cause most food allergies in the United States: milk, egg, peanut, tree nut, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, and sesame.”

“But people can be allergic to almost any food — more than 170 foods have caused allergic reactions.”

“So why does this matter to you and your classmates? Let’s find out.”

Why do you think it is important to know these foods, even if you’re not allergic to them?

Possible answer: “It is important to know the Top 9 food allergens because these are the ones that **MUST** be labeled on the foods you eat.”

SECTION 3 CAN ANYONE HAVE A FOOD ALLERGY?

Slide

On the Screen

Say This / Do This

Spark Conversation

7–8

Anyone — kids or adults — can have a food allergy, and you may not always know who does.

“Anyone can have a food allergy — kids, adults, teachers, even a favorite athlete. You might not always know who has one just by looking at them.”

Why would someone not tell others about their food allergy?

How would you want a friend to treat you if you had a food allergy?

Do you know any famous people that have a food allergy? (Students may name: Ariana Grande (singer), Serena Williams (athlete).)

Mentioning celebrities with food allergies can help show students that food allergies do not prevent people from doing amazing things.

SECTION 4 HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE FOOD ALLERGY?

Slide

On the Screen

Say This / Do This

Spark Conversation

9–10

33 million Americans have food allergies — 1 in 10 adults and 1 in 13 kids. Icon grid shows that’s about two students in every classroom.

“About 33 million Americans have a food allergy. That is 1 out of every 10 adults and 1 out of every 13 kids.”

“That means about two students in every classroom in the country have a food allergy.”

“Food allergies are serious, and they affect kids just like you and your classmates.”

Can you picture two kids in this classroom — how does that number feel now?

You can put this number in perspective by saying, “Did you know if you put all the people with food allergy into one state, it would be bigger than the population of Texas!”

SECTION 5 RECOGNIZING AN ALLERGIC REACTION

Slide	On the Screen	Say This / Do This	Spark Conversation
11–12	A body map of symptoms in kid-friendly language, grouped by face, eyes/ears, tongue/mouth, throat, chest, stomach, skin, speaking, and emotions.	<i>“An allergic reaction can show up almost anywhere in the body, not just on the skin.”</i> <i>“A kid having a reaction might say things like ‘my lips feel tight,’ ‘there’s a bump in my throat,’ or ‘I feel like something bad is happening.’”</i> <i>“Some reactions are mild. Others — like trouble breathing or a big drop in energy — can be life-threatening. That is why noticing these clues matters.”</i>	If a friend said their tongue felt ‘funny’ or ‘heavy,’ what would you do? (Answer: Get an adult!) Consider having kids guess where on the body reactions can happen to make it more interactive

SECTION 6 WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Slide	On the Screen	Say This / Do This	Spark Conversation
13–14	Simple emergency response: get an adult right away.	<i>“If you think someone is having an allergic reaction, your job is simple: get an adult to help, right away.”</i> <i>“Say it loud and clear: ‘Someone needs help — come quick!’”</i>	Which adults in our school could you go to for help? Why is it important to get an adult instead of trying to handle it yourself?

SECTION 7 LIFE WITH A FOOD ALLERGY

Slide	On the Screen	Say This / Do This	Spark Conversation
15–16	Everyday places where food matters and can be tricky for someone with a food allergy: eating out, eating in, grocery shopping, school, birthday parties, travel, sports, vacation.	<i>“Food shows up everywhere — birthday parties, lunchtime, sports snacks, vacations. For someone with a food allergy, each of these can take extra planning and can feel stressful.”</i>	Look at this list — which of these happens in your own week? What could a good friend do to make those situations easier?

SECTION 8 BEING A PAL: PROTECT. ASK. LEARN.

Slide	On the Screen	Say This / Do This	Spark Conversation
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17–18	Section divider, then: wash hands before and after eating.	<i>“Washing your hands with soap and water before and after you eat helps protect your friend from allergens that might be left on your hands. For example, when you eat Doritos, you are left with cheesy “dust” on your hands.”</i>	Why do you think leftover crumbs or food on our hands could be a problem for a friend with a food allergy?
19	Ask an adult if food is safe	<i>“It is important not to share your snack or lunch, but food is everywhere. A good friend can be a second set of eyes—checking food and asking an adult whether it is safe.”</i>	
20	Keep people with food allergies safe: avoid the food they're allergic to when together, know where they keep their medicine, don't share food, get an adult if your friend needs help, and wash your hands	<i>“There are simple habits that keep a friend safe: avoid the food they are allergic to when you are with them, know where they keep their medicine in case they or an adult need to get it, never share food, get an adult if your friend needs help, and wash your hands with soap and water before and after you eat.”</i>	Why would “do not share food” be one of the most important rules on this list?
21–22	Be kind to each other; closing 'Be a PAL' image.	<i>“Above all, being a PAL means being kind — including your friend, checking in on them, and never making them feel different for having an allergy.”</i>	What is one kind thing you could say or do to support a friend with a food allergy?

SECTION 9 PRACTICE: BE A PAL

Slides 23–29 present three short scenarios about a student named Petey. Read each scenario slide aloud (or invite two volunteers to act out the lines), then pause on the discussion question below before revealing the next slide, which shows a model PAL response.

SCENARIO 1 — SLIDES 23–24

Petey's stomach hurts as you both leave the cafeteria.
He doesn't want to play at recess — he wants to lie down.
He says it feels like something is stuck in his throat.
Ask the group: "What would a PAL do?" and let a few kids answer before revealing the next slide.

PAUSE & ASK

What would a PAL do?

MODEL ANSWER (NEXT SLIDE)

Petey doesn't seem okay — this could be an allergic reaction. A PAL gets an adult right away and doesn't wait to see if it gets worse.

SCENARIO 2 — SLIDES 25–26

Petey, you, and your friend Anna are playing together.
Anna offers Petey a cookie from her backpack.
Petey says, "No thank you, I have a food allergy."
Anna says, "Come and have some, it's probably OK."

PAUSE & ASK

What would a PAL do?

MODEL ANSWER (NEXT SLIDE)

Even one bite of the wrong food could make Petey sick. A PAL does not pressure a friend to eat something risky — instead, wait to snack together or ask an adult to help find something safe for everyone.

SCENARIO 3 — SLIDES 27–28

Two kids in your class are allergic to milk and peanuts.
Before school, you had peanut butter, toast and a glass of milk.
Ask the group about what they should do before heading to school or class.

PAUSE & ASK

What would a PAL do?

MODEL ANSWER (NEXT SLIDE)

Wash your hands before going to school. Washing your hands helps protect your friend from allergens that could still be on your hands or face.

EXTENDING THE PRACTICE

If time allows, ask the group to invent a fourth scenario of their own — a lunchroom, recess, or birthday party moment — and act out what a PAL would do. This is a good moment for an older student buddy to share a real (age-appropriate) example.

SECTION — WRAPPING UP

Slide 29 — Thank You & Resources

Close by reviewing the three things a PAL does: Protect, Ask, Learn. Remind the group that food allergies are common, serious, and manageable — and that the small habits covered today (washing hands, avoiding eating the food allergen around the person, and getting an adult during a reaction) makes a real difference for their classmates.

For additional information and resources from FARE (Food Allergy Research & Education), visit foodallergy.org or email education@foodallergy.org.

Quick Recap: Three Ways to Be a PAL

- **Protect** — wash your hands, avoid sharing food, and know where a friend's medicine is kept.
- **Ask** — be a second set of eyes and ask an adult if your friend is unsure if a food is safe.
- **Learn** — recognize the signs of a reaction and get an adult immediately if you see them.

Optional Wrap-Up Questions

- What is one thing you are going to do differently after today's lesson?
- Who is someone you could check in with this week to be a good PAL?

Optional Activities

- Label Detectives Game
- Coloring boards
- Glitter game
- Food allergy games and activities: foodallergy.org/resources/school-activities