

CROSS-CONTACT DEMONSTRATION



Use this script to guide a short, hands-on demonstration for children. The activity uses glitter as a pretend food allergen to show how allergens can move from hands to objects and the importance of hand-washing (and that hand sanitizer doesn't work!). *Note: We do not recommend using glitter glue sticks as they may contain irritants or allergens.*

✦ Materials

- Glitter
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand wipe (or baby wipe)

Props: A toy, book, cup, utensils, or paper plate to show how the “pretend allergen” can move to things we touch.

Facilitator Script

1 Opening

Facilitator says:

- “Today we’re going to learn how to help keep friends with food allergies safe.”
- “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.”
- “A food allergy is when the body thinks that a food is dangerous, and the body overreacts to try to protect you. Even a tiny amount of certain foods can make a person with food allergy very sick.”
- “This glitter is going to be our pretend food allergen. Let’s see where it spreads.”

2 Demonstration

1. **Facilitator does:** Ask the child to hold out one hand. Place a small amount of glitter in the child’s palm.
2. **Facilitator says:** “Let’s pretend this glitter is a tiny bit of food that could make someone with a food allergy sick. We are going to watch where it travels.”
3. **Facilitator does:** Have the child touch a toy, book, cup, or paper plate.
4. **Facilitator asks:**
 - “Where do you see glitter?”
5. **Facilitator does:** Add a small amount of hand sanitizer and ask the child to rub their hands together as they normally would.
6. **Facilitator asks:**
 - “Did the hand sanitizer make all the glitter go away?”
 - “Where do you still see glitter?”

7. **Facilitator does:** Have the child touch a toy, book, cup, or paper plate. If appropriate, offer a high-five to show how the glitter can move when they high-five a friend.
8. **Facilitator says:** “Look! The glitter spreads to what we touched. This is called cross-contact. Cross-contact means a food allergen spreads from one place to another, like from hands to toys, tables, or food. If this were a real food allergen, it could spread when someone touched your hand or you touched something. For a person with a food allergy, even a tiny amount could make them very sick. That’s why we wash our hands with soap and water or wipes and clean the things we touch.”
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3 Closing Message

Facilitator says:

“The glitter stayed on our hands and got all over other things, including people. It stayed on our hands even after hand sanitizer. Just like the glitter is a pretend food allergen, real food allergens can stay on our hands and move to things we touch. They are not removed by hand sanitizer. When we wash our hands and clean tables, we help keep our friends with food allergies safe and included.”