

FACTS ABOUT FOOD ALLERGY BULLYING

Food Allergies and Allergic Reactions

- Food allergies affect 15 million Americans. This includes 1 in 13 children – roughly two in every classroom.
- Nearly 40 percent of children with food allergies have experienced a severe or life-threatening reaction, such as anaphylaxis.
- In the U.S., a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room every three minutes.
- Consuming even a trace amount of the wrong food can trigger a dangerous reaction. Being touched by an allergen can also cause a reaction.
- Strict avoidance of problem foods is the only way to prevent a reaction.
- Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially fatal allergic reaction. Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis. Delays in receiving epinephrine can result in death.

Food Allergy Bullying

- According to a recent study,* more than one third of children and teens with food allergies (ages 8-17), reported being bullied specifically because of their food allergies – usually by classmates.
- The bullying frequently included threats with foods.
- In almost half the cases reported in this study, the children did not report the bullying to their parents.
- Food allergy bullying is associated with a lower quality of life and distress in both children and their parents.
- Communication is key: When parents know that their child is being bullied, the child's quality of life is better.
- To learn more about food allergy bullying, visit www.foodallergy.org/its-not-a-joke.

* "Child and Parental Reports of Bullying in a Consecutive Sample of Children with Food Allergy," Shemesh E, Annunziato RA, Ambrose MA, Ravid NL, Mullarkey C, Rubes M, Chuang K, Sicherer M, Sicherer SH. Pediatrics. 2013 Jan; 131(1):e10-7. doi: 10.1542/peds.2012-1180. Epub 2012 Dec 24.