



LISA MADIGAN

ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

Protecting Students From Life-Threatening Allergic Reactions Fatal Allergies Among Children Increasing

One in 13 children suffers from some type of food allergy, and the number is on the rise.¹ Of those affected, nearly 40% suffer from allergies that are severe and life threatening.² High school aged children, ages 14-17 years old, are most likely to have a severe food allergy.³ Food allergies are the leading cause of anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction that can result in death, and account for over 300,000 hospital visits by children every year.⁴

It is crucial that children with life-threatening allergies have access to emergency epinephrine when anaphylaxis occurs. Epinephrine can save your child's life by opening his or her airways until emergency personnel arrive. Without this emergency supply, dialing 911 is the only option school personnel have if a student forgets his or her EpiPen and has an anaphylactic reaction or has a first-time reaction. Any delay in administering epinephrine can be fatal.

25% OF FIRST-TIME SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS AMONG CHILDREN OCCUR IN SCHOOL.⁵

Access to Epinephrine in Schools

Public Act 97-0361 allows your child's school to maintain a supply of emergency epinephrine auto-injectors for students who have forgotten their EpiPen at home. In addition, a *school nurse* may administer an EpiPen to *any* student suffering from anaphylaxis.

If your child has no known allergies, ask your child's school to obtain an emergency supply of epinephrine auto-injectors for unforeseeable situations. If your child does have severe allergies, ask the school to implement an Emergency Action Plan, an Individual Health Care Plan, or a Section 504 Plan. The supply of emergency epinephrine allowed under this Act is not intended to replace epinephrine prescribed to students with known allergies. We encourage you to work with your school to develop a plan that accommodates your child's needs throughout the school, including in the classroom, in the cafeteria, at after-care programs, during school-sponsored activities, and on the school bus.

Questions regarding food allergies and anaphylaxis?

Contact the Food Allergy Initiative at info@faiusa.org or 855-324-9604.

¹ Gupta et al., "The Prevalence, Severity and Distribution of Food Allergy in the United States," *Pediatrics*, June 20, 2011.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Anaphylaxis*, The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, <http://www.foodallergy.org/section/a>.

⁵ Sicherer et al., "Clinical Report - Management of Food Allergy in the School Setting," *Pediatrics*, Vol. 126, No. 6, December 1, 2010, p. 1232 -1239.