



The Canadian **Safe School** NETWORK

ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS

The New Reality of Food Allergy Bullying

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ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS

- Today's Discussion
 - Bullying in Schools
 - Food Allergy Bullying
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Family and School Support
 - School Response
 - Food Allergy Bullying Case Example
 - Discussion



ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS

- *Bullying in Schools*
- What is Bullying?
 - Unwanted, aggressive behaviour
 - Repetition
 - Imbalance of power
 - Types of Bullying
 - Verbal
 - Physical
 - Social
 - Cyberbullying



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- *Signs and Symptoms of Bullying*
- Loss of interest
- Withdrawn, quiet
- Fear
- Not eating, losing weight
- Physical ailments
- Self Harm
- Injuries



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- *Food Allergy Bullying PSA: It's Not a Joke*



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○ *Food Allergy Bullying*

- About 25% of students experience bullying because of their food allergy
- 50% for students in grades 6-10
- Multiple episodes
- Mostly at school, among peers
- Teachers and school staff as perpetrators
- Bullying because of allergy or carrying medication
- 57% of those bullied are harassed with their allergen



Information from:

<http://www.acaai.org/allergist/Resources/letters/Pages/BullyingandFoodAllergyWhatCanAllergistsDo.aspx>



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- *Food Allergy Bullying*
- Children learn about each other's allergies
- Torment student by switching lunches
- Parents not always aware
- Students scared of lurking allergens



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- *Bullying Prevention*
- Peer to Peer
- School community educated
- Early identification and intervention
- Children given strategies
- Consistent messages



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○ *Family and School Support*

- Bullying is NOT a normal part of growing up
- Serious risks for those being bullied and those who bully
- We are role models for our children
- Empowering our children
- Listen to your kids!
- Stand up for your kids



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○ *Family and School Support*

- Talk to your child's school
 - Principal, Teacher
 - Trustee, Superintendent

- What steps is the school willing to take?
- Consider the mental health of your child



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- *Family and School Support*
 - Talk to your child's doctor/allergist
 - Discuss the risks of bullying
 - Allergist as a resource and crusader
 - Collaboration with your allergist



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○ *School Response*

- School Boards like TDSB have policies on anaphylaxis
- TDSB has implemented policies
 - Reducing exposure to allergens
 - Communication with parents and school community regarding life-threatening allergies
 - Staff trainings
 - Emergency procedures



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○ *School Response*

- Sabrina's Law enacted in 2006
- Created after Sabrina Shannon died because of exposure to an allergen at school
- First legislation of its kind in the world
- Law ensures schools have policies in place to address anaphylaxis
 - Includes providing training to staff



ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS

○ *Food Allergy Bullying Case Example*

- Erica Dacunha, 16, Toronto
- Faces several severe types of allergies
- Suffers from PTSD and OCD due to previous allergic reaction
- Students would leave her allergens hidden all over the classroom
- Other children were difficult, but parents were harder
 - Meeting to see if she should be forced to leave the school

What would you do if this were your daughter?



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QUESTIONS?

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