

Published June 8, 2016 2nd edition

Public Interest Incorporated Foundation

**Japan Association for
Improving School Lunch**

5F, 1-18-9 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 160-0022, Japan
Tel: +81-3-3357-6755
Fax: +81-3-3357-6756

<https://www.gakkyu.or.jp/>

Back issues of this newsletter are available at the URL above.

For Lifelong Health

Toward Preventing Food-Allergy Incidents in School Lunches	1
Key Points for Managing Food Allergies at School: School Edition	2 - 4
Notes	4

Toward Preventing Food-Allergy Incidents in School Lunches

Key Points for Managing Food Allergies at School

School Edition

In 2012, a student died following suspected anaphylactic shock caused by a school lunch. In response, and to prevent another such tragedy, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) published the Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in School Lunches (*1; hereafter, the Guidelines) in March 2015. The Guidelines are based on the Guidelines for Managing Allergic Diseases at School issued by the Japanese Society of School Health and set out six Fundamental Principles (*2).

This newsletter focuses on the two most important Fundamental Principles: putting safety first, and ensuring, as an organization, that food-allergy management is based on physicians' diagnoses. The relevant content of the Guidelines has been summarized in an accessible format for schools.



“So that every student can enjoy school lunch safely and happily.”

Photo courtesy of Shibafuji Elementary School, Kawaguchi City.

Key Points for Managing Food

Putting Safety First and Establishing a Food Allergy Response Committee

To provide school lunch to students with food allergies while putting safety first, each school establishes a Food Allergy Response Committee on the basis of the standardized policy set by the municipal board of education or other authority. The school then develops a basic food-allergy management policy suited to its own conditions and acts as an organization.

Proceeding Under a Standardized Policy Established by the Municipal Board of Education or Other Authority

The Guidelines state that municipal boards of education and other authorities should establish a standardized policy for managing food allergies, support the efforts of each school, and ensure that food-allergy management within schools proceeds on the basis of that policy.

Establishing and Operating a Food Allergy Response Committee

The principal, as the person responsible, establishes a Food Allergy Response Committee composed of relevant personnel and takes the lead in advancing its work.

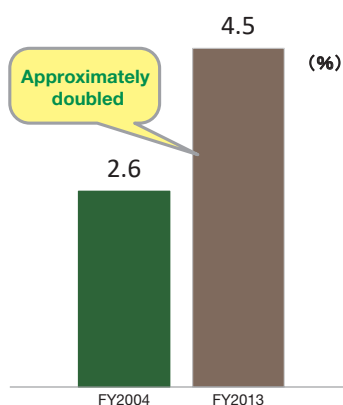
Photo 1: Food Allergy Response Committee



Photo courtesy of Moriama Elementary School, Moriama City.

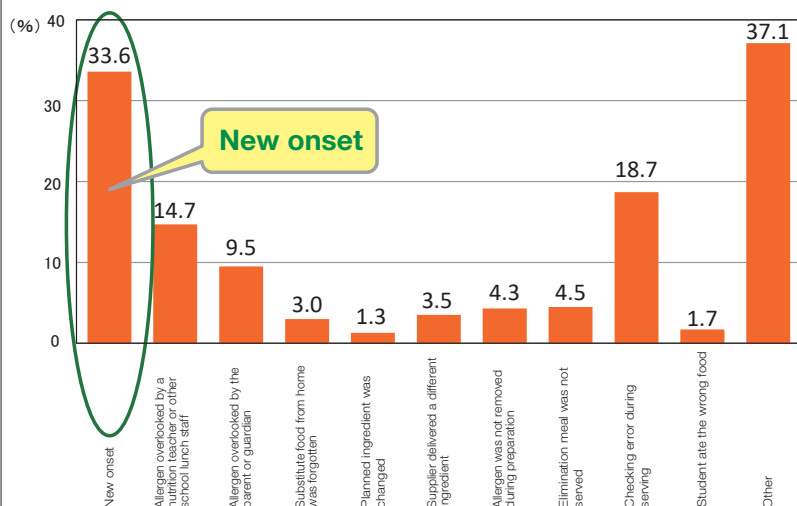
1. The Food Allergy Response Committee gathers accurate information on food allergies; discusses and decides how the school will respond; establishes an internal crisis-management system; coordinates with relevant organizations; and plans and conducts training for all staff in accordance with the school's circumstances.
2. The principal and school administrators establish an organizational structure that enables the whole school to coordinate during an emergency and foster a sense of personal responsibility among all staff.
3. The principal and school administrators attend individual meetings involving the school nurse, nutrition teacher, and parent or guardian. At the meeting, the School Life Management and Guidance Form (for Allergic Diseases), completed on the basis of a physician's diagnosis, and other individual information are reviewed; the school's basic policy and specific response are then explained. The presence of the principal and administrators also helps build the parent's or guardian's trust.
4. Even if no student currently enrolled has a food allergy, a new allergy may develop or a student with a food allergy may transfer into the school. The school must therefore establish a school-wide response system in advance.

Figure 1: Prevalence of food allergy among students



Source: Adapted from the FY2013 Survey on Health Management in School Life, a MEXT-commissioned project conducted by the Japanese Society of School Health.

Figure 2: What caused food-allergy incidents? (Respondents who experienced at least one incident in FY2013)



Source: Report on the Food Allergy Survey, Japanese Association for Dietetic Research and Education.

Allergies at School: School Edition

Managing Food Allergies as an Organization

The principal, school administrators, and all other staff respond as one organization, and the entire school works in partnership with parents and guardians.

The 2012 fatal incident had a major influence on the recognition that schools and parents or guardians must work together and respond as an organization. The tragic case clarified the key points of food-allergy management at school.

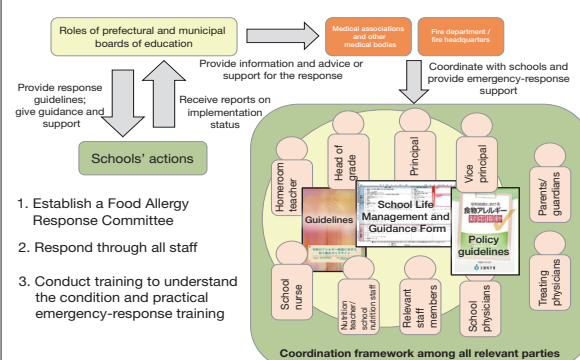
Lessons Learned from the Fatal Incident

Following the Fatal Incident

1. All school staff and parents or guardians share accurate information.
2. Communication and checking are thorough during school lunch preparation, portioning, and serving.
3. Rules for eating school lunch are taught thoroughly.
4. During an emergency, staff apply what they learned in training and coordinate as an organization.

The incident showed that if organizational coordination and information sharing are insufficient, staff may be unable to respond appropriately in an emergency even when training has been provided, and a catastrophic outcome may result.

Data 1: Framework for Promoting the Management of Allergic Diseases



Source: Adapted with modifications from the Fundamental Ideas about How to Cope with Allergic Disease at School, MEXT and the Japanese Society of School Health

Clearer Measures to Prevent Recurrence of Incidents at School

It became clear that, to prevent the most serious accidents, each school must establish a system for promoting food-allergy management as an organization under its own basic policy, and that everyone involved must share information and coordinate their response.

This issue has summarized, for schools, two especially important elements of the Guidelines and the Fundamental Principles. The number of students with food allergies is increasing. Even where no affected student is currently enrolled, schools must recognize that a tragic incident could occur at any time and in any place. We hope that the School Edition and the Parents and Guardians Edition will promote wider use of the Guidelines so that every student can enjoy school lunch safely and happily.

Data 2: Example from Food Allergy Q&A for Nutrition Teachers and Other School Lunch Staff

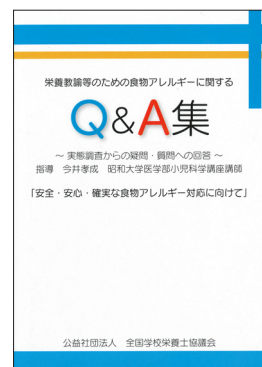
Question

At the strong request of a parent or guardian, we are providing school lunch to a student who may experience anaphylactic shock. During advance consultation, the board of education provided no clear instructions and told us to decide at the principal's discretion. We were also told that the decision on whether the student should bring a packed lunch should be made by the parent or guardian, not the school. The student has not experienced anaphylaxis so far, but we are anxious every day because it could occur at any time. How should we decide whether to provide school lunch to a student at risk of anaphylaxis?

Answer

First, school-lunch accommodations are not determined by the wishes of the parent or guardian. On the basis of the physician's instructions (submitted through the School Life Management and Guidance Form), the school's Food Allergy Response Committee should make the decision in accordance with the school's food-allergy management policy. The highest priority is the safety of the school lunch, not the wishes of the parent or guardian or the preference of the board of education. If the school cannot make the decision alone, it should coordinate and consult with the board of education and the student's treating physician.

The questioner's continuing concern may indicate that the current arrangement does not yet provide sufficient safety. If the concern arises from limitations in facilities, equipment, staffing, or procedures, suspend the unsafe accommodation and improve those conditions first. The Food Allergy Response Committee should review the case and clarify the school's policy. If the concern is not tied to a specific unresolved hazard, continue practical training, strengthen staff understanding of anaphylaxis, and establish a system that allows school lunch to be provided safely and confidently.



Source: Q51, Food Allergy Q&A for Nutrition Teachers and Other School Lunch Staff, Japanese Association for Dietetic Research and Education.

Data 3: How to Use an EpiPen® Auto-Injector

1. Remove the auto-injector from its carrier tube.



2. Grip the auto-injector in your dominant hand with your fist closed around it.



3. Remove the blue safety cap.



4. Place the orange tip against the outer thigh and press firmly until you hear a click. Hold it in place while counting to five.



If the student cannot self-administer, another person should administer it.

The auto-injector can be administered through clothing.

Before administering through clothing, check the pocket for any objects.



5. Confirm that the orange needle cover has extended.

If it has not, return to Step 4.



Before use / After use

Adapted and quoted from the Hokkaido Board of Education material, How to Manage Food Allergies at School: <http://www.dokyo.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/hk/ktk/susumekata/p26-32.pdf>

Notes

*1 Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in School Lunches

Available on the MEXT website: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/sports/syokuiku/1355536.htm

*2 Six Fundamental Principles for Managing Food Allergies in School Lunches

- Provide school lunch to students with food allergies. To make this possible, safety must be the highest priority.
- Manage food allergies organizationally through a Food Allergy Response Committee or equivalent body.
- In accordance with the Guidelines for Managing Allergic Diseases at School, require submission of the School Life Management and Guidance Form based on a physician's diagnosis.
- To ensure safety, apply a binary decision to each relevant item: either provide the affected student with an accommodation from which the causative food has been completely removed, or do not provide that item to the student.
- Do not undertake unreasonable or overly complex accommodations, taking account of the facilities, equipment, and staffing at the school and kitchen.
- Boards of education and other authorities should establish a standardized policy for food-allergy management and support each school's efforts.

*3 Standardized Policy

Developed as a basic policy for food-allergy management:

- A basic implementation policy that reflects the facilities, equipment, and staffing of the school and school lunch kitchen.
- A policy for handling information to be provided in preparation for emergencies.
- A policy for preparing individual action plans and emergency-response manuals.

Fact-Finding Survey of Nutrition Teachers and Other School Lunch Staff

Concerns and questions raised by school lunch staff regarding the "safety first" policy set out in the final report of MEXT's Committee on Food Allergy Surveys:

1. The School Life Management and Guidance Form or medical certificate appears to have been written to reflect the parent's wishes.
2. The physician's diagnosis is unclear.
3. Excessive elimination is being demanded without a physician's diagnosis.
4. Accommodations are being requested despite insufficient facilities, equipment, or staffing.
5. There is a risk of oversight, error, accidental inclusion, or cross-contact.
6. Procedures are becoming more complex, and the number of students requiring accommodations is increasing.
7. No medical specialist is available for consultation.
8. Staff awareness of risk is inadequate or inconsistent.
9. Information is not shared sufficiently among the school, medical institutions, and the family.
10. There are concerns about new-onset food allergy and food-dependent exercise-induced anaphylaxis.

Source: Report on the Food Allergy Survey, Japanese Association for Dietetic Research and Education.

To request copies of this issue, send the mailing address, name, telephone number, fax number, email address, and number of copies required to the Association Secretariat by fax or email. **Examples from local governments and other organizations are available on the Association website.**

Tel: 03-3357-6755 | Fax: 03-3357-6756 | Email: kaizen@gakkyu.or.jp



Unauthorized copying, reproduction, or republication of any article, photograph, chart, or other content in this newsletter is prohibited. To use the content for instruction in schools or other educational settings, submit the "Application for Permission to Reprint or Quote" available on the Association website. Additional copies can be supplied for use as instructional materials; please contact us.