

Think Club Australia takes the health and safety of our “Thinkers” and Team Members very seriously.

Enrolled within our workshops are often a number of children with life threatening food allergies. Due to the short period of time that we are involved with such children, the basis of our approach is risk minimisation and the education of Think Club Leaders and team members.

Aims:

This Policy aims to:

- Safely support, within the Think Club environment, children with severe allergies, anaphylaxis and other medical conditions.

Prevention Strategies:

- Sharing food, containers and utensils will not be allowed at Think Club. (e.g. lunchboxes and drink bottles)
- Bottles, lunchboxes, other utensils and other drinks provided by parents should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for whom they are intended.
- Children and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands before and after meal times.
- Ongoing training and education for educators about food allergy management, anaphylaxis and use of adrenaline injectors should be available.
- Use of food in workshops may need to be restricted depending on the allergies of particular children. Often, an appropriate alternative ingredient can be substituted.

Think Club Australia provides:

- Wet wipes in every workshop room to maintain cleanliness of hands
- First Aid Qualified Team Members on-site for the whole day – Easily identified by the First Aid badge on their shirt!
- Clearly identifiable Team Members – All team members wear either Red shirt or Cap to ensure children can find us easily.
- Name badges for each child, with subtle (but very clear to staff) identification that the child has an allergy.
- All workshop leaders and on-site supervisors with the medical details provided by parents regarding their child.

Parents are to provide Think Club with:

- Written authorisation for Think Club team members to administer the EpiPen or other medication or to assist a child to administer the medication.
- An EpiPen (or other medication) to Think Club for use with their child. They will need to ensure that the EpiPen (or Ventolin etc) is clearly labelled and not out of date, and replace it when it expires or after it has been used.
- ASCIA Action Plan for those with diagnosed Anaphylaxis. This plan outlines what to do if your child is having an allergic reaction. It must be completed and signed by your child’s doctor and stored with the adrenaline autoinjector, even if it is carried by your child. The plan includes personal details, signs of allergic reactions, instructions on how to use the device and whether to give any other medications. Further information: www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/action-plans-for-allergic-reactions-faq

Prevalence of food allergies

Food allergies affect approximately 1 in 50 children and it is likely that at school children will encounter and may accidentally ingest the one of the many products which causes an allergic reaction. Students with a food allergy may react to tactile (touch) exposure or inhalation exposure. Not every ingestion exposure will result in anaphylaxis but the potential always exists. Whilst peanut allergy is the most likely to cause anaphylaxis and death, eight foods (peanut, tree nut, milk, egg, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish) account for the vast majority of total food allergies.

When the symptoms to the allergic reaction are widespread and systemic, the reaction is termed “anaphylaxis”. Anaphylaxis is the most severe and sudden form of allergic reaction and should be treated as a medical emergency.

Symptoms of food allergies

Symptoms and signs of anaphylaxis, usually but not always, occur within the first 20 minutes after exposure but can in some cases be delayed for two hours or more. Symptoms and signs may include one or more of the following:

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing.
- Swelling of the tongue.
- Swelling or tightness in the throat.
- Difficulty talking or a hoarse voice.
- Wheeze or persistent cough.
- Dizzy/light headed.
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse.
- Pale and floppy (young child).

IN CONCLUSION

At Think Club Australia we seek to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of our community. We believe an effective partnership between home and Think Club will ensure the successful inclusion of students with life-threatening allergies. We are committed to responsible and achievable practices in reducing foreseeable risks associated with the support of students with anaphylaxis or other serious medical conditions.