

Guidelines for Responding to Allergies in Children / Young People

What is an allergy?

An allergy is an adverse reaction that the body has to a particular insect sting, food or substance in the environment. Most substances that cause allergies are not harmful and have no effect on people who are not allergic.

Michaela Foundation's Duty of Care

Michaela Foundation recognises that it has a duty to provide safe opportunities for children and young people of all abilities, regardless of any medical conditions, disabilities or allergies they may have. It is important that children with medical conditions or allergies are not unnecessarily excluded from participating in activities, and that reasonable steps are taken to accommodate their needs.

This briefing focuses on how Michaela Foundation staff/leaders should respond to young people with allergies.

Parents'/guardians Responsibility

Parents/guardians of young people participating in Michaela Foundation activities should:

- ensure they complete the parental medical information/consent form fully and accurately
- ensure they talk to Michaela Foundation staff/leaders/Camp Coordinator about the specific needs of their child and how to address/accommodate any identified risk
- update Michaela Foundation staff/leaders/Camp Coordinator of any change in circumstances
- consider a medical alert bracelet, watch or ID for their child
- check the expiry date of any medication
- Ensure their child has a 'rescue pack' which will be given to Michaela Foundation staff/leaders/volunteers and administered if necessary. This may include antihistamines or an inhaler for mild reactions, and possibly adrenaline injectors for more serious reactions e.g. anaphylaxis.

What should Michaela Foundation consider when a child with a serious allergy is attending Camp/an activity?

Information consent forms



- Michaela Foundation should gain consent (covering both the child's participation in the activity and the administration of medication or other medical assistance if required) from parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians should also be asked to update information about medical conditions (including allergies) as relevant.
- Information/consent should be gained from parents/carers at least three weeks prior to any event, to allow information to be collated and an individual risk assessment and care plan developed.
- Michaela Foundation should also ensure this consent form or a summary of relevant information and any medication travels with the child so that it is readily available should it be required.

Food

- If food is being provided, make sure that those with allergies are able to be included as much as possible. If a food isn't suitable and an alternative can't be found, ask parents/guardians for a suggestion.
- If a child has a nut allergy, then it's safer that nuts are banned from the organisation completely
- If prizes/gifts are given to the children it is best not to use sweets and chocolate

Most people at risk of a severe allergic reaction find the prospect of being stung very frightening. Less than 0.5% of the population experience a severe, generalised allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis.

- Fortunately the risks of this happening are reduced if precautions are taken. The chances of a sting proving fatal are reduced considerably if the victim is carrying self-injectable adrenaline (also known as epinephrine).
- A bee or wasp sting may cause a large swelling at the site of the sting. The swelling may be minor if the sting site is on the body however; if it is on the face or in the airway it could prove to be more serious.

Outings

- If eating out parents/guardians may be able to recommend somewhere that caters for their child's needs
- Make sure you know where the nearest hospital is in case it is required
- Ensure that you have all the information from the information/consent form that you need to be able to deal with the young person's condition, and take parent's/carer's emergency contact details with you

Adrenaline injectors (Brand names commonly used are EpiPen® and Anapen®)

- If a child has a serious allergy they can be in danger of having an anaphylactic reaction which could cause blood pressure to drop, swelling of the throat and blocked airways.
- A person in danger of having an anaphylactic reaction must carry an adrenaline injector which contains adrenaline and works quickly to reverse the symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction.
- Get a health professional to show you how to use the injector if it has been agreed with the young person and parents/guardians that a Michaela Foundation staff member/leader/volunteer will



administer medication in an emergency. Allergywise online training can help. Get expert advice if unsure of any situation or condition.

- Ensure that adrenaline injectors are within their expiry date. An out-of-date injector may offer some protection, but this will be limited.

Michaela Foundation Staff/Volunteers/Leaders responsibility

Michaela Foundation Staff/volunteers/leaders have a duty of care in relation to children and young people in sports organisations. Duty of care means that Michaela Foundation needs to take reasonable measures to ensure that individuals will be safe to participate in an activity.

Michaela Foundation should:

- ensure all children attending Michaela Foundation events/activities have a complete/up to date consent forms, with full details of the child's allergies
- have a copy of the child/young person's individual risk assessment and care plan
- communicate with parents/guardians and child directly
- ensure that information about a child's medical condition or allergy is shared with and easily available to any adult responsible for supervising the child (both during activities and free time)

Michaela Foundation Camp/Event Coordinators should:

- remember that information/consent forms should always be stored in a confidential place but accessible to leaders
- have their mobile phones charged and check they have a signal to allow calls to be made
- plan for additional supervision, e.g. when around food, in case of a reaction
- record incidents or concerns
- ensure correct storage and administration of medication

About anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially life threatening. Anaphylaxis is the body's immune system reacting badly to a substance (an allergen), such as food or an insect sting. The whole body can be affected, usually within minutes of contact with a substance, although in some cases the reaction can occur hours later. Anaphylaxis can cause the following symptoms in the body:

- skin: itching, flushing, hives (urticaria), rash or swelling (angioedema)
- eyes: itching, tearing, redness or swelling around the eyes
- nose and mouth: sneezing, runny nose, nasal congestion, swelling of the tongue or a metallic taste
- lungs and throat: difficulty breathing, coughing, chest tightness, wheezing or other sounds of laboured breathing, increased mucus production, throat swelling or itching, hoarseness, change in voice or a sensation of choking



- heart and circulation: dizziness, weakness, fainting, rapid, slow, or irregular heart rate or low blood pressure
- digestive system: nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps or diarrhoea
- nervous system: Anxiety or confusion
- feeling of impending doom

In extreme cases anaphylaxis can result in sudden collapse without any other warning symptoms.

What to consider if a child carries adrenaline injectors?

Adrenaline injectors rarely need to be used however if an adrenaline injector is prescribed for a child it must always be available.

Only a person who has been trained in their use should administer one. At least two of the Michaela Foundation leaders should be trained in the use of an adrenaline injector.

If an adrenaline injector does have to be used the person needs to be taken to hospital for a check up and observation as an anaphylactic reaction can re-occur again within 24/36 hours.

Who can deliver training on the use of adrenaline injectors?

A qualified doctor or nurse can give training to leaders on how to use an adrenaline injector. If this is not a feasible option for your organisation, please contact St John Ambulance or visit Allergywise online.

Adrenaline injectors' training is not covered in the basic first aid training course. Parents may also know how to access suitable training through the child's medical support or at least be able to signpost Michaela Foundation to who can help.

Useful Contacts:

Allergy UK - 01322 619 898 or email info@allergyuk.org

Anapen - www.anapen.co.uk

EpiPen Auto-Injector - www.epipen.co.uk

Kidsaware - www.kidsaware.co.uk

St John Ambulance - <http://www.sja.org.uk> (provide Anaphylaxis first aid training)

The Anaphylaxis Campaign - www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

The above information and advice has been put together with help and advice of Allergy UK website, The Anaphylaxis Campaign, EpiPen and CPSU.