

West Exmoor Federation



Nut Policy

January 2023

West Exmoor Federation Nut Policy

The West Exmoor Federation aims to practise a nut free policy although we recognise that this cannot be guaranteed. This policy serves to set out all measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. Our Pre-school, Little Berries, aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts yet also help them, as they grow up, to take responsibility as to what foods they can eat and to be aware of where they may be put at risk.

Definition

Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially fatal. Anaphylaxis is your body's immune system reacting badly to a substance (an allergen), such as food, which it wrongly perceives as a threat. The whole body can be affected, usually within minutes of contact with an allergen, though sometimes the reaction can happen hours later. This policy refers to nuts but at present also includes pine kernels and coconut.

Symptoms

The symptoms of anaphylaxis usually start between 3 and 60 minutes after contact with the allergen. Less commonly, they can occur a few hours or even days after contact. An anaphylactic reaction may lead to feeling unwell or dizzy or may cause fainting due to a sudden drop in blood pressure. Narrowing of the airways can also occur at the same time, with or without the drop in blood pressure. This can cause breathing difficulties and wheezing.

Other symptoms:

- swollen eyes, lips, genitals, hands, feet and other areas (this is called angioedema),
- itching,
- a strange metallic taste in the mouth,
- sore, red, itchy eyes,
- changes in heart rate
- a sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- itchy skin or nettle-rash (hives)
- unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhoea, or nausea and fever.

Anaphylaxis varies in severity. Sometimes it causes only mild itchiness and swelling, but in some people it can cause sudden death. Anaphylaxis can lead to death if breathing becomes severely obstructed or if blood pressure becomes extremely low (known as shock). If symptoms start soon after contact with the allergen and rapidly get worse, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

Staff

The onus falls on all staff to read and follow this policy both in school and when out on trips and outings.

- Caution must be taken at certain times of year such as Easter and Christmas. If Staff distribute confectionary care must be taken to ensure that no nuts are included in the product. Fruit sweets such as Haribo are a better alternative. Particular products that are a cause for concern are:
 - Celebrations
 - Roses
 - Heroes
 - Quality Street
- All product packaging must be checked for warnings directed at nut allergy sufferers and if the following or similar are displayed, the product must not be used in school without supervision of staff and supervised hand washing:
 - Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers
 - This product contains nuts

Parents

We ask parents not to bring in any food or treats (such as for birthdays) unless they have checked the ingredients carefully, likewise for snack and lunch box choices. Homemade snack or party food contributions must have a label detailing all ingredients present. Packaging must be checked for:

- Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers
- This product contains nuts

Lunch box items will be removed by staff and replaced with snack items if they contain nuts or nut products.

Children

All children are regularly reminded about the good hygiene practice of washing hands before and after eating which helps to reduce the risk of secondary contamination.