

Food Allergies and Intolerances

Highlights	Policy Statement
	Residents with food allergies and/or intolerances will be identified upon admission and steps will be taken to prevent resident exposure to the allergen(s).
	Policy Interpretation and Implementation
	General Guidelines:
Food Allergies	1. Food allergies affect approximately 6 to 8 percent of the general adult population.
Allergic Reactions	2. Food allergies can trigger moderate allergic reactions (e.g., nasal congestion, gastrointestinal cramping, etc.) or can be severe and life threatening (anaphylaxis).
Allergens	3. True food allergies are immune system responses to allergens (foods). IgE antibodies to foods attach to mast cells in body tissue (e.g., skin, nose, throat, lungs and gastrointestinal tract) and basophils in blood. When allergens are eaten, the IgE antibodies attach to mast cells and basophils in certain sites and those cells produce histamine, an inflammatory compound.
Reaction Timeframe	4. Allergic reactions to food can take place within a few minutes or over several hours.
Common Food Allergens	5. In adults, the most common food allergens are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shellfish; b. Peanuts; c. Tree nuts; d. Fish; or e. Eggs.
Peanuts and Shellfish	6. Peanuts and shellfish generally cause the most severe forms of allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).
Food Intolerances	7. Food intolerances are unpleasant reactions to specific foods that are not life threatening but can necessitate avoidance of the triggering foods. For example, lactose intolerance is the inability to digest milk sugars due to a deficiency in the enzyme lactase. Lactose intolerance causes gas, bloating, cramping and diarrhea.
Food Additives	8. Some people have strong reactions to food additives, such as the flavoring monosodium glutamate (MSG) and sulfites, a naturally occurring substance in wine.
Gluten Intolerance	9. Gluten intolerance, or celiac disease, is an abnormal immune response to the protein gluten found in wheat and other grains. Symptoms are varied but include poor nutrient absorption, weight loss and diarrhea.
	Assessment and Interventions:
Food Allergy/Intolerance Assessment	1. Residents will be assessed for a history of food allergies and intolerances upon admission.
Documentation	2. All resident reported food allergies and intolerances will be documented in the assessment notes and incorporated into the resident's care plan.

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Severe Food Allergies

Meals

Decision to Remove Food from General Menu

Food Substitutions

Staff Training for Food Allergy Emergencies

Standing Orders for Emergency Medications/Interventions

Administration of Medications/Interventions

3. Severe food allergies will be noted on the face of the chart (in the form of a sticker or permanent marking indicating "Severe Food Allergy: *(name of food)*") and communicated in writing directly to the Dietitian and the Director of Food Services.
4. Meals will be specially prepared for residents with severe food allergies so that cross-contamination with allergens does not occur.
5. In the case of intense sensitivity to food products such as peanuts or shellfish, the multidisciplinary team, including the Medical Director, the Director of Nursing, the Dietitian and the Administrator shall meet and decide if the food should be removed from the general menu.
6. Residents with food intolerances and allergies will be offered appropriate substitutions for foods that they cannot eat.
7. Nursing staff and food service employees shall be trained in the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions to foods and basic first aid measures in the event of a food allergy emergency.
8. The Attending Physician will be notified of the resident's food allergies and standing orders for emergency medications (e.g., epinephrine, antihistamines) and interventions will be taken.
9. If a resident reacts to a food allergen, appropriate medications and/or interventions will be administered per standing orders and according to the severity of the reaction.

References	
OBRA Regulatory Reference Numbers	483.15(e); 483.35(d)(3)
Survey Tag Numbers	F246; F365
Related Documents	
Policy Revised	Date: __9/16/2016____ By: _____ Date: _____ By: _____ Date: _____ By: _____ Date: _____ By: _____