Food Allergies: Trends in Research and Resources

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Learning Outcomes:
As a result of participating in this educational activity, learners will be able to:
- Describe the prevalence and severity of food allergies;
- Discuss current food allergy school policies and management strategies in the school setting; and
- Identify two school nursing concepts and three resources for food allergy management.

About the Session:
Food is a common part of the school day; and, for 8% of children in the United States with a food allergy (or two children per classroom), it can make eating in schools challenging. In this presentation, we will review the prevalence of food allergies in schools, including the most common types of food allergens. We will also describe the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction, including the most severe type of a reaction-anaphylaxis. From there, the discussion will focus on food allergy management in schools. This includes common documentations used in schools to track students with allergies; medications that are prescribed and how they are kept on school campuses; and the training of school nurses and staff on recognizing food allergy reactions. We will identify current food allergy policies in schools based on a nationwide survey. This survey captures school policies at a school-wide level, a classroom level, and training procedures that are common among staff at schools in grades kindergarten through 12. The goal of this presentation is to provide school nurses with the knowledge and scope of food allergies to better prevent, treat, and manage students with food allergy in a constantly changing system.

Why this is important to a school nurse:
The purpose of this activity is to enable the learner to sharpen their care coordination skills in the management of food allergies in the school setting. Learners will be able to identify school policy components as a result of a national survey and become familiar with evidence-based resources for use in their school nursing practice.

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