



Patch Curriculum

Preface

Girl Scouts of Central Indiana has partnered with Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) to offer the Food Allergy Awareness Patch Program. FARE is the world's leading food allergy advocacy organization and the largest private funder of food allergy research. Its mission is to improve the quality of life and health of individuals with food allergies and provide them with hope through the promise of new treatments.

The Food Allergy Awareness Patch Program requirements give Girl Scouts the opportunity to learn about life with food allergies, with an emphasis on raising awareness of this public health issue affecting 32 million children and adults in the United States.



Food Allergy 101



Food allergies are a serious and potentially life-threatening medical condition affecting over 33 million people in the U.S. One in every 13 children has a food allergy, meaning that on average, two students in each classroom are affected. Every 10 seconds, someone experiences a food allergy reaction severe enough to require emergency medical attention.

Causes and Common Allergens

A food allergy occurs when the immune system overreacts to a harmless food protein, known as an allergen. The nine most common food allergens in the U.S. include milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, soy, wheat, fish, shellfish, and sesame. Family history and pre-existing allergic conditions, such as eczema or asthma, increase the likelihood of developing a food allergy. Proper diagnosis by a healthcare professional is crucial to avoid unnecessary dietary restrictions and ensure adequate nutrition.

Symptoms and Severity

Food allergies can develop at any age and may involve multiple allergens. Reactions can range from mild, such as hives or stomach discomfort, to severe anaphylaxis, which can cause low blood pressure, breathing difficulties, and loss of consciousness. Currently, there is no cure for food allergies, making awareness and proper management critical.

Managing Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis can occur within minutes or hours after ingesting an allergen and may involve symptoms affecting multiple organ systems, such as skin reactions, respiratory distress, gastrointestinal issues, and cardiovascular symptoms. In some cases, symptoms may reoccur hours after the initial reaction, a phenomenon known as biphasic anaphylaxis.

The Role of Epinephrine

Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for anaphylaxis. This life-saving medication works by rapidly reversing severe allergic reactions. Patients prescribed epinephrine should familiarize themselves with its proper use through training devices and manufacturer-provided instructional materials. Since epinephrine has an expiration date, individuals should regularly check their auto-injectors or nasal spray devices and renew prescriptions as needed. In case of an anaphylactic reaction, even if the epinephrine device has expired, it should still be used, followed by immediate medical attention.

Actions: Do four of the following.

Get educated.

Learn about anaphylaxis, a dangerous allergic reaction, by watching “Save a Life: Recognizing and Responding to Anaphylaxis” on the FARE website. This online course highlights symptoms of an allergic reaction and treatment, including how to use epinephrine auto-injectors. Participants receive a certificate of completion.

Educate others.

Learn about the Be a PAL program on the FARE website and present it to another Girl Scout troop (best for grades K-3). The program teaches children how to be a good friend to those with food allergies and offers activity sheets and a presentation.

Push for policy.

Meet with local or state lawmaker(s) to discuss the importance of having policies in place to keep people with food allergies safe. View FARE's Advocacy Resources to get started.

Just the facts.

Learn about common myths and misconceptions about food allergies.



Recipe redo!

Recreate a recipe for a treat like cake or cookies to be free from at least six of the Top 9 allergens. View FARE's allergen substitution list for common allergen replacement suggestions.

Donate thoughtfully.

Collect "free-from" foods to donate to your local food bank, such as Top 9-free baking mixes, shelf-stable rice and coconut milk, and wheat-free cereals. More than 20 percent of children living with food allergies also live with food insecurity. Be sure to share FARE's food bank resources for staff and clients with the food bank.



Hear from an expert.

Invite a local allergist to speak to your troop. Ask the speaker to talk about concerns of people with food allergies, how they are diagnosed and advice they give to those who live with a food allergy.

Shop smarter.

Go food shopping with an adult and imagine you have a peanut or milk allergy. Read ingredient labels and note what items you would not be able to eat. Be sure to read FARE's food labeling resources to learn about labeling procedures.

Cook with caution.

Learn about cross-contact and watch food being prepared at home. Can you identify ingredients that might cause a problem for someone with a Top 9 food allergy? Where does cross-contact occur? What are things you can do to make the kitchen safer for those with allergies?



Happy Halloween!

Bring the Teal Pumpkin Project (TPP) to your neighborhood during Halloween. Paint small pumpkins teal and share them with your neighbors, along with information on the Teal Pumpkin Project and a flyer they can display.

Resources

FARE website - www.foodallergy.org/

Allergy 101 - www.foodallergy.org/living-food-allergy/food-allergy-essentials/food-allergy-101

Save a Life: Recognizing and Responding to Anaphylaxis - www.foodallergy.org/our-initiatives/education-programs-training/fare-training-food-allergy-academy/recognizing

Be a PAL Program - www.foodallergy.org/resources/be-palr

Advocacy - www.foodallergy.org/take-action/how-advocate

Allergy Myths & Facts - www.foodallergy.org/resources/food-allergy-myths-and-facts

Top 9 Common Allergens - www.foodallergy.org/living-food-allergies/food-allergy-essentials/common-allergens

Food Bank Resources - www.foodallergy.org/resources/food-banks-and-soup-kitchens

How to Read a Food Label - www.foodallergy.org/resources/how-read-food-label

Avoiding Cross Contact - www.foodallergy.org/resources/avoiding-cross-contact

Teal Pumpkin Project - www.foodallergy.org/our-initiatives/awareness-campaigns/living-teal/teal-pumpkin-project

Congrats on completing the FARE patch curriculum!

Patches are available at the Girl Scout Shop.

