

Food Allergy Ribbon

Girl Scouts for All Appreciation Series Patch Program Ribbon 4

Purpose: To increase knowledge and understanding of people who experience food allergies.

- Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies do any 3 of the first 9 requirements.
- Girl Scout Juniors do any 5 of the first 9 requirements.
- Girl Scout Cadettes do any 7 of the first 15 requirements.
- Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors do 8 of the 20 requirements.

1. Read through this booklet: bit.ly/PALpatchcurric to become familiar with food allergies.

People who have food allergies have to avoid any trace of the food to which they are allergic. Imagine you are allergic to eggs and you know that even the smallest bite of a food that contains egg will make you really sick. Read the label of every food you eat. How did you feel after doing this for a day? What types of situations did you have to look out for? How would you feel if you had to avoid egg all the time?

2. What extra steps would you have to take in planning your next camping trip if one of the girls in your troop was allergic to milk? With a group, plan menus to

ensure that she would be able to eat everything. List some milk-free alternatives to traditional camping foods, such as s'mores.

3. What is the difference between a general family doctor and an allergist? What do allergists do? Make an advertisement for a children's allergist.

4. Some schools have programs in place to help provide a safe environment for children with food allergies. For example, some schools assign peanut-free tables in the cafeteria; others don't allow eating in the classroom and don't allow food to be used in art and math projects. Pretend you are a school principal. What plans would you put into place to help students with food allergies avoid a problem food? How would these plans affect all the other students in the school? Create a poster listing your plan and how it will help children with food allergies, and share it with your troop. Take a survey. How would everyone feel about following your plan? How would they feel about it if they were the student with food allergies?

5. Many birthday parties involve food. Pretend that you are planning a party and you want to invite all of your friends, including one who is

allergic to eggs, and another who is allergic to peanuts and tree nuts. What foods, activities, and party favors will you plan to use so that all the guests can enjoy everything?

6. If a friend is having a food-allergic reaction, actions as simple as recognizing symptoms and seeking medical treatment immediately can make a BIG difference. Make a poster listing all of the common symptoms of an allergic reaction, and outlining what you should do if a friend is having an allergic reaction. Share your poster with your troop.

7. Sometimes kids with food allergies will get teased or harassed by other students. How would you feel if you were being teased just because you couldn't eat some of the same foods as everyone else?

With a group, discuss ways you could help someone who is getting teased because of her food allergy.

8. Plan a "food allergy party" to share what you've learned with another Girl Scout troop. Give a presentation to educate others about food allergies. Be sure to list the symptoms of an allergic reaction, and emphasize the seriousness of food allergies. Prepare and serve treats that are

**The Girl Scouts for All Appreciation Series Patch Program must be completed first.*

Special thanks to Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital and The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network for "Be a PAL Patch Program." If you have earned this ribbon, then you have also earned the be a PAL patch here: bit.ly/PALpatch

free of some of the most common food allergens, such as milk, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, or soy. Make ingredient labels for all foods and post them next to each item. Ask people if they can taste the difference between a food that has an allergen in it and one that doesn't.

9. Sometimes recipes contain surprise ingredients. For example, did you know that peanut butter is sometimes used to thicken chili or that walnuts are sometimes added to blue cheese dressing? Read some cookbooks or recipe pages of a magazine. Did you find any ingredient surprises? Find and share an example of where milk, eggs, peanuts, or tree nuts have been used in a recipe that you would not expect?

10. Put on a play. Script a situation where a friend who has food allergies is having a reaction. Act out some things that others could do to help this person. Share your play with other troops or your community. If possible, videotape your play.

11. Since mild food-allergic reactions can even be caused by kissing a person who recently ate the offending food, it's important for teens to explain their food allergies to their dates. Pretend that you are allergic to peanuts, and role-play how you would explain your food allergies to a new date. How would your discussion differ if he was someone you had just met or if he was a long-time friend of yours? During the course of your date when would you discuss your allergy? Would you talk about it even if your plans did not include eating?

12. Invite a local allergist to speak to your troop. (Call 800-822-ASMA

for the name of an allergist in your area.) Ask the speaker to talk about the major concerns of people with food allergies, the diagnostic process, and what advice is given to patients who have just been diagnosed with a food allergy. What other types of careers deal with food allergy? How do people get into the food allergy field? What education is necessary to become an allergist? What are the pros and cons of working in this field?

13. Develop and administer a survey to members of your school or your service unit to gauge the level of food allergy awareness in your area. Analyze and share your results by creating charts or posters. Include food allergy facts and ways to help someone with food allergies. With permission, post them in your community, such as in a grocery store or a library.

14. Many people who have food allergies, especially those with multiple food allergies, visit a dietitian to ensure that their diet is nutritionally balanced. Interview a registered dietitian to find out how a diet is analyzed. What substitutions does he or she suggest to people allergic to the most common food allergens?

15. The Internet can be a great resource for people with food allergies, since many national chains and fast food restaurants post menus and ingredient statements on their websites. Pretend that you have a peanut allergy and visit the website of your favorite fast-food restaurant to see what foods you would still be able to eat.

Were you surprised at any foods that contained peanuts?

16. Examine how people with food allergies are portrayed in movies, books, television shows, and other

media. Determine how this portrayal affects the public perception of living with food allergies. Find at least three examples of characters with food allergies. How well do you think they were depicted? How would you revise those characters to make them more realistic?

17. Many food labels list "artificial flavors" or "natural flavors" on the ingredient statement, yet these flavors can contain food proteins to which individuals are allergic. Pretend that you are allergic to soy. Find an ingredient label that lists natural or artificial flavors, and, with permission, call the food manufacturer to ask if soy protein is present in any of those flavorings. How was your experience calling the manufacturer? Would you have felt differently if the answer to your question meant the difference between having a serious reaction or continuing with your day?

18. Cooking without certain foods can sometimes be tricky. An example is people with an allergy to wheat. Select a recipe and adapt it to be wheat-free. You may need to try several different combinations of non-wheat flours before you find one that works. How did it taste?

19. Watch how someone prepares food at home. See if you can identify ingredients that may cause a problem for someone with a food allergy, and pinpoint where cross-contact occurs. Note some things you could do to help make the kitchen safer for people with food allergies.

20. Some allergists concentrate on research in food allergies, as opposed to primarily treating patients. Read about the latest food allergy research at www.foodallergy.org. Which kind of allergist career interests you more?