

A New Allergy Aware You!

Gold Award project by Riley Miller

To get the most out of my lesson plan, I recommend doing at least one activity from each of the 4 categories.

My goal is to educate you on allergies and how to be more understanding and respectful of friends that have allergies.

Before starting your activities, read my book. You can find the book on the GS for All web page.

4 categories:

1. Explore the 8 most common food allergens
2. Understand the importance of not sharing food
3. Plan allergy safe meals
4. Share and apply your new allergy-awareness

Section 1: Explore the 8 most common food allergens

Overview:

1. Food allergies are very common; in fact, one in every 10 people has a food allergy! People can be allergic to almost anything, but there are 8 common things people are allergic to: milk, eggs, tree nuts, peanuts, shellfish, fish, soy, and wheat. These allergens are found in many foods you eat on a daily basis. It is important to identify what these allergens look like and what type of foods may contain these allergens!

Activities:

- a. **Identify labels** - Go through your pantry and look at some household food items. Identify the ingredients list on these items. Here you will be able to see if foods contain certain allergens. Most of the time common allergens will be bolded. Practice identifying what allergens certain foods contain! Practice using these skills on a daily basis. Pay attention to what ingredients are in common foods that you enjoy. By knowing what certain foods contain, you can help prevent allergy emergencies and allow for people with allergies to feel more secure and welcome.
- b. **Allergy Collage** - Choose one of the 8 most common allergens to research more. Find some common foods that that allergen could be in. After you come up with some foods, go through a magazine or grocery flyer and find some pictures of these items. Cut out these pictures and make an allergy collage! You can refer back to your collage when trying to plan an allergy safe meal. This will help you have a good visual of what some allergens look like in different forms. By having a better visual of foods that contain allergens, you can help your friends keep allergy safe and let them know you are looking out for them!
- c. **Watch a Video** - Watch the video I created as part of my Silver Award on the 8 most common allergens. This video will give you a great overview of the 8 most common allergens and some foods that contain these allergens. This video can be found on the GS for All web page.

Section 2: Understand the importance of not sharing food

Overview:

2. Sharing food is one of the most dangerous things you can do with someone who has a food allergy. When you are sharing food, you may not know what allergens that food contains. This can be very dangerous for kids with allergies. Be sure adults are present and aware if food is being shared. Kids with allergies may have to sit away from others if someone brings an item they are allergic to. This can be very isolating and make kids with allergies feel unwelcome and lonely. By doing simple things like not sharing and being cautious what you eat around others, you can allow for friends to be safe and included.

Activities:

- a. **Come up with a poster** - Pretend your community center has asked you to create a poster on why sharing food is unsafe. Explain the medical and emotional reasons why sharing food should not be practiced. Make your poster colorful and eye-catching! By creating awareness of why sharing is unsafe, you are helping people with allergies be included and feel safer.
- b. **Act it out** - With a friend or family member, come up with a short skit on why sharing food is an unsafe thing to do. Brainstorm different scenarios where sharing could be present (like the lunchroom, a troop meeting, or a party) and center your skit on one of them! Include why sharing can be dangerous. Also Explain ways to be both safe and inclusive. Present your skit to your troop or a group of friends. You won't just be building your own allergy awareness, but you will be teaching others too!
- c. **A science experiment**- Sharing foods, without an adult to supervise, can be a recipe for disaster and can include cross-contamination. Let's do an experiment to understand what cross contamination is! Gather some glitter and a couple of household items like a notebook or pencil. If you do not have glitter, you can also use flour or cheeto dust! Put your hand in the glitter (the glitter will represent an "allergen"). Next, touch these household items. The glitter spreads from your hand to the items. This is a great example of cross-contamination. It shows that after touching one thing it is very easy to spread it to other items/foods. Even though you may be offering someone something to eat that seems safe, cross-contamination is still possible. For example, you may have touched a peanut butter sandwich or an egg earlier, and these food particles could still be on your hands. Remember to wash your hands to prevent cross-contamination! Remember not to share foods unless an adult is present!

Section 3: Plan allergy-safe meals

Overview:

3. Part of keeping allergy safe is knowing how to apply your allergy awareness to real life scenarios. Whether it is deciding what to eat at a troop meeting or what foods to serve at a party with friends, it is always important to be aware of possible allergies. By knowing how to plan an allergy-safe meal, you create a safe environment that allows more kids to be included in daily activities.

Activities:

- a. **Cooking Show!** - Pretend a local restaurant has come up with a new cooking show. To get onto the show, you need to make a short video creating an allergy-free meal and explain why having allergy-free food alternatives is so important. You can share this video with friends. This will give them a fun, new recipe and also help spread allergy awareness!
- b. **Daily Lunches-** Think of some lunches you have brought to school before or had at home. Look at what these meals contain and try to find allergy-free alternatives for these foods. Finding yummy allergy-free alternatives for foods you enjoy allows you to keep the same yummy taste but also be allergy-safe and aware of others. By doing these easy swaps, you allow for more people to feel included in the lunchroom and are helping create a safe environment. Try swapping out some foods with allergy-safe alternatives next time you are around others with allergies!
- c. **Allergy-safe S'mores** - S' mores, one of the most classic camp foods, is a favorite to many. Sadly, many girls can't enjoy this sweet treat due to allergies. Try coming up with an allergy-safe S' mores recipe. Consider all parts of the S'more: the graham crackers, the marshmallows, and the chocolate. Try to find allergy-free alternatives for these ingredients! Try your new recipe at your next troop meeting or camping trip! Your new recipe will make girls with allergies feel great and included in the fun.

Section 4: Share and apply your new allergy-awareness

Overview:

4. Having an allergy attack can be both scary and life-threatening for the person experiencing it. It can be hard to have an allergy on a day to day basis. Many kids with allergies can be left out of certain experiences because of their allergy. Knowing how to be aware and respectful of others' allergens can allow for more people to be included. It is important to educate others about allergies, including the medical and emotional effects they have on people with these allergies.

Activities:

- a. **Thinking of you!** - Pretend a close friend of yours recently experienced an allergy attack. How would you react and make them feel better? Come up with a card reassuring your friend that everything will be alright. Make sure to be comforting and understanding as having an allergy attack can be both scary and stressful. Knowing how to comfort others and being understanding of others' differences allows for people to feel more welcome and safe.
- b. **Make a short video** - Make a short video to send to friends about why allergy awareness is important. In your video, cover both the safety side of allergy-awareness and the emotional side. By educating others, you are creating a more allergy-safe environment!
- c. **Create a comic strip** - Create a comic strip that helps spread allergy awareness. Brainstorm some scenarios where an allergy could come in the way of someone being included. Draw pictures and create a storyline to help resolve the issue, and make sure that everyone can be included! By knowing how to resolve issues with allergies, you can create a more inclusive environment that people with allergies will appreciate!