



Melrose Rural Care

Allergy Aware:

As we have children in our centre and community who suffer allergic reactions to various allergens, our site is an 'Allergy Aware' environment. Many children will "outgrow" their food allergies. However reactions to nuts, seeds and seafood tend to be lifelong (*Allergy Capital 2003, Food Allergy – Overview*).

The symptoms of allergies range from mild to life-threatening.

For example:

If someone in our centre eats peanuts and then touches playground equipment, the equipment can then be contaminated with enough peanut residues to trigger a severe reaction in a child with nut allergies.

Our paramount concern is for the safety and well being of all people in our centre, so we ask that:

All peanut butter and nut products are eliminated from children lunches and snacks.

This will include some dips, crackers, Nutella or peanut butter sandwiches, biscuits and cakes with nuts in them, muesli bars with nuts, chocolate containing nuts (i.e. Snickers) and/or nut mixes. Products labelled "may contain traces of nuts" are acceptable, at this stage.

Why is important that a centre become allergy aware and allergy friendly?

- In Australia, more than 90% of fatal reactions to food have occurred in children aged 5 years and older
- Of those who have died from anaphylaxis, 90% have been allergic to nuts, the exposure was usually away from the home (including centre).

Implementation:

/Caregivers of children with a known allergy are to provide a 'Health Care Plan' to be completed by the children's doctor.

Parents/Caregivers of children with a known allergy are expected to educate their child in the self-management of their food allergy (eg safe and unsafe food, strategies for avoiding exposure to potentially unsafe food, symptoms of allergic reactions, how and when to tell an adult that they may be having a reaction and how to read food labels).

An education program for parents/caregivers, staff and children will be implemented so that:

- the importance of nut-free foods is known,
- the symptoms of allergic reactions is known,
- alternative foods are explored, and
- the importance of lists of ingredients and how to read them is known.

This policy will be provided to all new families who enrol at the centre.

Staff will observe foods provided for lunch and snacks whilst supervising eating times. Parents/caregivers of children who bring foods containing nuts to centre will receive a letter outlining the importance of our 'Allergy Aware Policy'. Children with nuts in their recess/lunch will be asked to eat in an area that is separate from the main eating area for the class.

Detailed information is available at the following website: www.allergy.org.au

Implementation supported by:

- Parent/Caregiver of child with allergy speaking to class teacher/s and Principal or delegate prior to child's attendance to allow any individual practices be put in place.
- All peanut paste containers (some may be used for storage) removed from centre.
- Information added to Parent Information Booklet, which is given to new parents on enrolment.
- A photo of child with allergy and brief details included in class Roll Book and put in staff room so all people working at the centre are all aware of the symptoms and procedures.
- Information and reminders to be a regularly (at least twice per term) in newsletters.

- Information and reminders to be a part of any notes regarding food based activities to be held at the centre.
- Warning notices were put on entrance doors.
- All cooking activities will have recipes checked for ingredients.