

# Teach Teal:

## Food Allergy Awareness

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**Noelle Nelson's Girl Scout Gold Award Project**



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*- Noelle*



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**Website:** [teachtealfoodallergyawareness.weebly.com](http://teachtealfoodallergyawareness.weebly.com)

# Parents

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Teach Teal: Food Allergy Awareness curriculum! Your child is about to embark on a learning journey that is unique. For the next few days, your child will learn all about food allergies, a condition that affects over 32 million Americans including 1 in 13 children. Food allergies are not always taught in schools yet kids with food allergies attend schools and face many experiences such as food allergy bullying, allergic reactions in school, and more. While your child may not have food allergies, they may one day meet someone who does and this curriculum will prepare them for when that occurs. Your child will learn everything from the science of food allergies to reading ingredients. On top of that, your child will learn about empathy and compassion that can be applied to their lives right now. We encourage asking your child questions about what they are learning during the three days. By the end, your child will be a mini food allergy advocate!

# Day 1: Food Allergy Basics

Objective: Students will learn what a food allergy is, the science behind food allergies, the signs of allergic reactions (including information on Anaphylaxis), what to do if someone is having a food allergy, and some tips if they have food allergies. Students will be able to name the top 9 allergens, a few food allergy statistics, and medications that are used with allergic reactions. Students will know and understand that kids with food allergies are just like them but have to go through some scary challenges.

**Day 1 Vocabulary Words:** Allergy, Allergen, Anaphylaxis, Benadryl, Epinephrine, Histamine, Immune System, IgE antibodies, Life-threatening, Oral Food Challenge, Symptoms, and Zyrtec.

## Today's Lessons

*What is a food allergy?*

*The Science Behind Food Allergies*

*Top 9 Allergens*

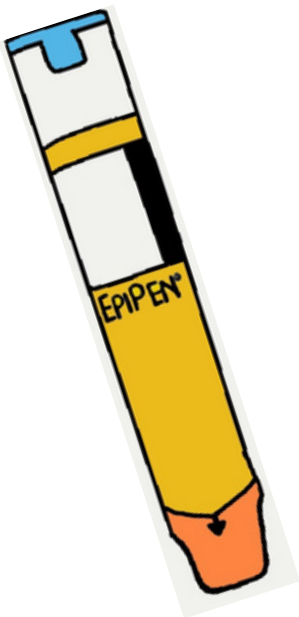
*Symptoms of Allergic Reactions*

*Anaphylaxis*

*Statistics*

*Stories From Food Allergy Friends Day 1:*

*Jadin and Bella*



Noelle N.

# What Is A Food Allergy?

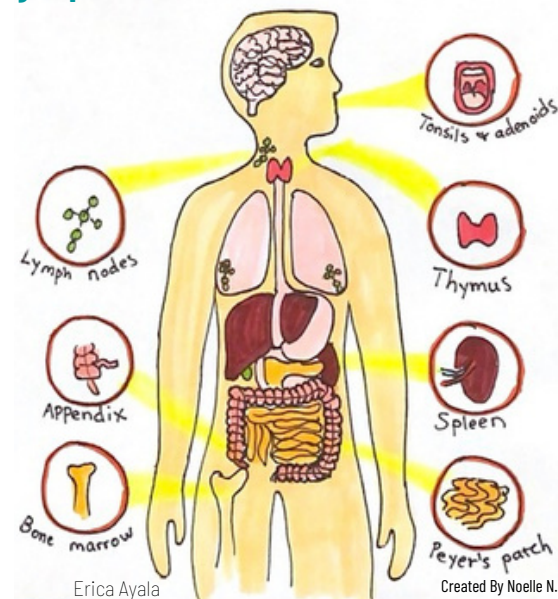
**Have you ever heard someone say, "I can't have this, I'm allergic"? You may be wondering, "what does that mean?". Today we are going to talk about what food allergies are.**

Food **allergies** are when someone's immune system dangerously reacts to proteins in certain foods. Even the smallest amount of the food someone is allergic to can cause a very harmful reaction. Food allergies can be mild or they can be very severe and they need to be taken very seriously.

Let's now dive into the science behind food allergies.

The word immune (ih-MY00N) means to be protected. Your immune system is the part of your body that fights off illnesses like the flu. The immune system includes organs, tissues, and cells that all work together to keep your body healthy and safe. When someone has a food allergy, their immune system makes a mistake and thinks the protein in a certain food is a dangerous invader. The body fights back by releasing something called **IgE antibodies** which are the proteins the immune system makes in order to identify and remove germs. The IgE antibodies hold onto the **allergen** which is the food causing an allergic reaction and then sends a message to all the other cells in the body to stop the allergen. Then the cells release **histamine** and other chemicals to try to stop the allergen. This is what causes an allergic reaction. Histamine is a chemical that is in our body's cells. It is what causes sneezing, runny noses, or other allergy symptoms. Histamine in an allergic reaction acts on a person's different body parts such as their stomach, throat, lungs, skin, eyes, and nose which causes the different allergic reaction symptoms that we will discuss today.

In an allergic reaction, the body makes a mistake and thinks the allergen is a dangerous intruder or bad guy when they really aren't. Since the immune system thinks the allergen is the bad guy, it fights the allergen like they are which is not good for the person and their body!



# What Is A Food Allergy?

Any food can cause an allergic reaction but these nine allergens cause the most allergic reactions. They include dairy, eggs, sesame, fish, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, peanuts, and wheat. See if you can memorize these!

Note: Food allergies are not

- Lactose Intolerances
- Gluten Intolerances
- Or a preference of food (Vegan, Kosher, Vegetarian, etc.)

## TOP 9 Food Allergens



Dairy



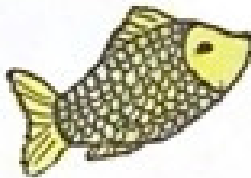
Eggs



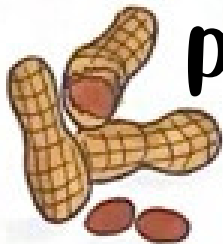
Soy



Sesame



Fish



Peanuts



Wheat



Pecans

Tree Nuts



Pistachios

Walnuts



Cashews



Almonds



Shellfish

*Fact: If someone has an allergy to dairy that means they can't eat pizza or ice cream with dairy in it but they could eat dairy free ice cream and pizza. If someone is allergic to peanuts they can't eat peanut butter but they can put sunflower butter on their sandwiches for school!*

### Vocabulary Alert!

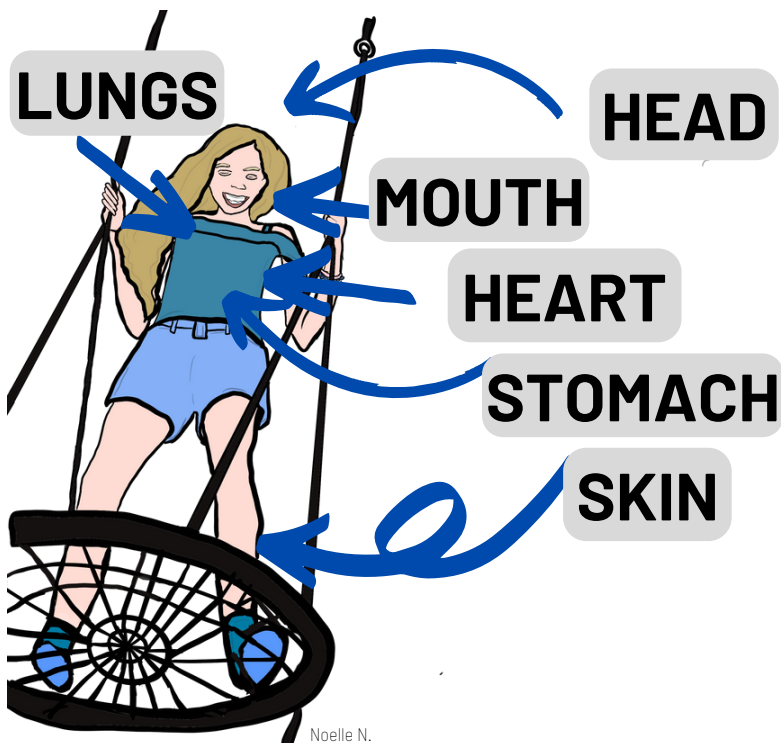
Allergen

Histamine

IgE

# Allergic Reactions

If a person has a food allergy and consumes the food they are allergic to, they can have a mild allergic reaction or a very dangerous and severe allergic reaction. This is unpredictable, which means a person could have mild allergic reactions a lot but one day have one that can cause them to die which is scary. This is why we have to be very careful if someone has a food allergy because we want to make sure that they are always safe and healthy!



**These areas of the body can be affected in an allergic reaction.**

**MILD:** If a person has an allergic reaction that is mild, they are given antihistamine also known as H1 blockers. This can include **Benadryl** and **Zyrtec**.



## Symptoms in Detail

These are **symptoms** of an allergic reaction. When reading these, remember that these are very serious symptoms and they are not something to joke about.

### **MILD**

Sneezing, itchy nose, runny nose hives, itchy skin, uncomfortable stomach, and feeling nauseous.

### **SEVERE**

Wheezing, coughing a lot, shortness of breath, dizzy, pale, faint, weak pulse, blue, throwing up, diarrhea, lips/tongue swelling, it is difficult to breathe, tight throat/hoarse throat, hives all over a person's body, red all over a person's body, confusion, feeling like there is something bad going to happen, and anxiety.

**Anaphylaxis**

**Fact:** Symptoms normally develop in a few seconds to a few minutes but sometimes symptoms may not start for one to two hours after a person eats the food they are allergic to.



# Anaphylaxis

**Anaphylaxis** is a severe, possibly life threatening allergic reaction.

Anaphylaxis can cause some pretty scary symptoms such as difficulty breathing, vomiting, dizziness, fainting, heart palpitations, or sometimes even death. Let's learn some more. Remember to not laugh or make jokes about any of these scary symptoms because they are not something to joke about.

**Anaphylaxis (let's practice together: an-uh-fil-LAX-is) is a severe, possibly life threatening allergic reaction which causes the immune system to release certain chemicals due to the allergen exposure. When the immune system releases these chemicals, it causes a person's airway to block, which means it is very hard to breathe. We need to breathe to stay alive! A person who has anaphylaxis could also have a severe drop in blood pressure.**

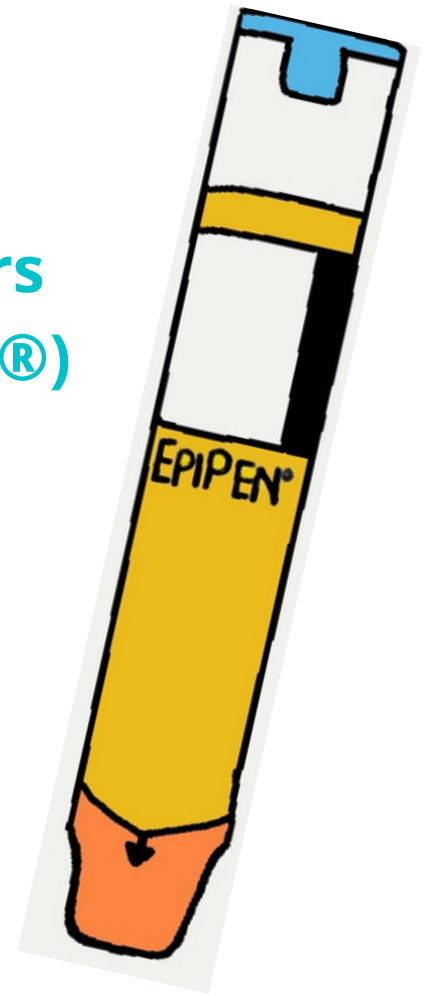
**Anaphylaxis is rarely caused by anything but food allergies and other allergies such as allergies to medications. Anaphylaxis occurs most of the time in minutes after a person eats a food they are allergic to. In some cases, it can occur up to 2 hours after a person eats something they are allergic too. If someone has an anaphylactic allergic reaction it can be deadly; however, there is a medication that can help save their life.**

*Signs of Anaphylaxis:* Rash on the skin, hives, swollen lips, vomiting, nausea, rapid or weak pulse, trouble breathing, tight throat, low blood pressure, stomach pain, diarrhea, fainting, and losing consciousness.

# Anaphylaxis

You may know that an EpiPen can help a person if they are having an allergic reaction. **Epinephrine** is a medication that is used if a person has a severe anaphylactic allergic reaction. Epinephrine is also known as Adrenaline. There are different types of medications which have the medicine epinephrine (also known as adrenaline) in them:

**Adrenaclick®**  
**Auvi Q®**  
**EpiPen® auto injectors**  
**(EpiPen® or EpiPen Jr ®)**  
**Symjepi®**  
**Twinject®**



After one of these medications, 911 must be called and a person has to go to the hospital. It is important for a person with food allergies to be careful not to consume their allergens because in some cases, the medications do not work.

# Food Allergies

## What Can You Do?

If a friend is having an allergic reaction, **TELL AN ADULT** as quick as you can. A teacher, coach, parent, grandparent, guardian, aunt, uncle, older sibling, neighbor, or any other adult you can find. If you have a phone available, **call 911.**

## Statistics and Facts

- In America, 32 million people have potentially **life-threatening** food allergies. 85 million people are affected by food intolerances or food allergies. 1 in 13 kids have food allergies. That means if you have thirteen friends, one may have food allergies. That's a lot of people!
- You may know some people with food allergies. Friends, siblings, cousins, or even yourself!
- While most people have food allergies when they are a kid or a baby, people can have food allergies at any age! Food allergies are more common in kids like you but some adults have food allergies too.
- Sometimes if an older sibling has food allergies, the younger sibling does too but not always.
- Sadly, there is no cure for food allergies.

## If You Have Food

### Allergies

**If you have food allergies...**

- Do not keep them a secret!
- If there is something you cannot eat, say "no thank you" and don't eat the food. Keep yourself safe so that you don't have to worry about feeling bad at your sports game, rehearsal, school, or while spending time with family.
- Make sure to tell an adult if you are at a birthday party, sleepover, or a playdate that you have food allergies and let them know where your life-saving medication is just in case.
- ALWAYS carry your EpiPen or other life-saving medication. If you carry an EpiPen, always have 2!
- Tell a teacher if you feel you are having an allergic reaction.
- Finally, don't forget to read the ingredients on foods before you consume them!

## How Do You Find Out?

You cannot catch food allergies! If someone has a food allergy, the way to know for sure that it is an allergy is with a skin test or a blood test. These tests show if IgE antibodies that are food specific are present in your body. Sometimes, an *oral food challenge* will be used to determine an allergen or see if one is outgrown. An oral food challenge is when a person with food allergies eats slowly increasing doses of a food so they can see if they experience an allergic reaction. An oral food challenge must always be done with a doctor present! People may test for food allergies if other people in their families have food allergies, they have other allergies, they have asthma, or they have symptoms after eating a food and are wondering if they are allergic.

# Stories From Food Allergy Friends

**It's story time! Now we are going to read some true stories from real kids like you who have food allergies.**



Jadin is in his senior year of high school. He enjoys playing video games and has had food allergies since he was born. Jadin is allergic to milk, eggs, nuts (except almonds), and shellfish. One accomplishment Jadin has is earning the highest score you can earn on tests for advanced classes (AP Exams)!

“When I was in first grade, my best friend spilled milk on the left side of my face. I remember my face being really itchy, but I was able to stay relatively calm. I took my Benadryl, washed my face off, and told an adult about my situation. Later in class, my teacher asked me if I was okay. With my face half red, I told her, “yeah.””

**Jadin and Bella are kids like you, they just happen to have food allergies. Both of them have experienced some pretty scary allergic reactions but they still like to play video games and participate in sports or other activities. Bella and Jadin are winning awards and getting the highest scores on really hard tests! Kids with food allergies are just like normal kids, they just have to go through a few more challenges.**



Bella is in tenth grade and enjoys drama, softball, speech and debate, reading, and more! She recently placed fourth in a speech and debate competition!

**Bella is allergic to nuts.**

“When I was nine I attended my schools yearly fair. We have something called 'Granny's Kitchen' where people sell homemade baked goods. I tried a dessert, and within seconds of eating it I knew I had an allergic reaction. Someone called 911 and I took some medicine while waiting for it to arrive. When the paramedics got there, my symptoms were receding but they still recommended I go to the hospital so my mom took me. While I was there, they gave me epinephrine as a shot, and I stayed there until they cleared me and I went home. I had to miss my softball game!”

# Review Time

## What did you learn today?

- Food allergies are when a person's immune system dangerously reacts to proteins in certain foods.
- The top nine allergens are dairy (milk), eggs, wheat, soy, sesame, tree nuts, peanuts, fish, and shellfish. An allergen is a food a person is allergic to.
- If a person has a food allergy and consumes the food they are allergic to, they can have a mild allergic reaction or a very dangerous and severe allergic reaction called Anaphylaxis.
- If someone is having an allergic reaction, find an adult!
- If you have food allergies, don't keep them a secret!
- An EpiPen or other medications that contain epinephrine can help a person if they are having an allergic reaction.
- 32 million people have potentially life-threatening food allergies.
- You can't catch food allergies!
- Kids with food allergies like to play video games, participate in drama, play softball, and win awards in competitions just like any other kid. They just have to go through some extra challenges that require them to be really brave!
- Food allergies are serious.

# Day 2: Be Kind

Objective: Students will learn why it is wrong to bully a person with food allergies, how they can include a friend with food allergies, and how to be empathetic and kind. Students will be able to name the different medical alert symbols. Students will understand that people with food allergies go through many experiences.

Day 2 Vocabulary Words: Asclepius, Caduceus, Compassion, Empathy, Inclusion, Oral Immunotherapy, Universal

## Today's Lessons

***Bullying***

***Inclusion with Food Allergies: How can I help?***

***Medical Alert Jewelry***

***Empathy and Compassion***

***Stories From Food Allergy Friends Day 2:  
Luna***



# Bullying

**Is it okay to call someone a name? Can you make fun of someone if their hair looks different than yours or if you don't like their shoes? Did you answer "no" to all of these questions? If you did, good job! Last question: Is it okay to make fun of someone with food allergies?**

Have you ever been called a name before or has someone said something mean to you? Doesn't it make you sad. Lots of kids with food allergies are bullied because they have food allergies. That is not nice. A person who has food allergies deserves to be respected and treated like everyone else. Just because kids with food allergies may have to overcome more challenges than kids without food allergies does not make them any different from all other kids.

Food allergy bullying is when someone teases or threatens a person with food allergies, oftentimes using the food that they are allergic to. This is not okay and it is dangerous. Food allergy bullying is dangerous because if someone has food allergies and they were being mocked or threatened with the food they are allergic to, they could have a very serious allergic reaction. All the different symptoms that we talked about yesterday could occur and that person may have to go to the hospital or they could possibly die due to an allergic reaction. This is why we should never use food as a weapon against someone with food allergies. It can cause extremely dangerous consequences and we never want to hurt anyone or cause anyone to become very sick.

We never want to bully anyone, with or without food allergies because we are all friends and we are all people. Everyone deserves to be treated with love and respect. Treat others the way you want to be treated: you don't want to be called names or made fun of!

# Bullying

## Kids With Food Allergies and Any Kid Being Bullied

If someone is bullying you, use a clear and strong voice and tell the bully to STOP. Right after, go and tell a teacher or an adult. Keep yourself safe.

## Friends of Kids With Food Allergies

If your friend is being bullied because they have food allergies, get a teacher and help your friend tell that person to STOP. Then, help get your friend away from the bully and to a teacher.

**It is NEVER okay to make fun of someone with food allergies!**



# Inclusion With Food Allergies

## **What do my friends with food allergies go through?**

Kids with food allergies go through a lot of experiences you may not even recognize.

Here are just a few of the many experiences kids with food allergies have to go through:

- They have to read ingredients so that they can make sure that a food item doesn't have food they are allergic to in it. Ingredients are the words on a food package that say what is inside. Sometimes these labels are really long but most kids with food allergies know how to read them!
- Kids with food allergies have to bring their own food many places in case they can't eat the food that is served at a birthday party, the cafeteria, or a playdate.
- Kids with food allergies have to sometimes miss out on fun treats that they are allergic to at a birthday party or event. But luckily, they may bring their own version that they can eat.
- Kids with food allergies have to speak up a lot when they need to let a teacher, friend, or adult know about their food allergies.
- Kids with food allergies may have to carry life-saving medication to school, the park, or other activities.
- Kids with food allergies have to have allergy tests and sometimes Oral Immunotherapy which you can learn more about more in the vocabulary section.
- Kids with food allergies have to double-check their orders with restaurant employees when they go out to eat. Sometimes, they can't even eat at a restaurant.
- Kids with food allergies may have to spend time in the emergency room or the hospital if they have an allergic reaction.



Noelle N.

# Inclusion With Food Allergies

**Now that you know not to bully a friend with food allergies and that our friends with food allergies may go through a lot more challenges than you thought, you may be wondering how you can help them. What can you do to be friends with someone who has food allergies?**

**Inclusion** means making everyone feel welcome, even if they are different from us. Everyone is included and everyone belongs no matter who they are and what they experience. Inclusion is very important and we should include our friends with food allergies.

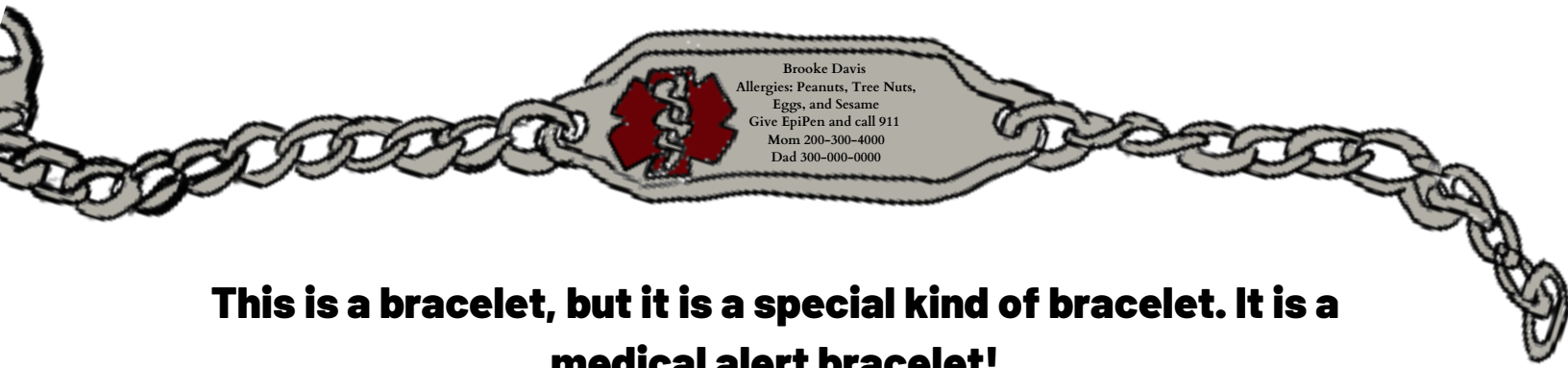


Erica Ayala

## **How can we include and be a friend to someone with food allergies?**

- First, we can understand that our friend's food allergies are serious. Don't make jokes about their food allergies and don't make fun of them. Remember everything we learned about food allergies and how they can cause severe symptoms that we never want to happen to our friends.
- Find out what they are allergic to so that you can make sure not to eat those foods around them. If a friend is allergic to peanuts, save your peanut butter cookies for later or move to a different table to keep them safe.
- Include your friend with food allergies in your games and activities. Just because they have food allergies doesn't mean they aren't a kid just like you!
- Don't bully your food allergy friend. Now that you know why food allergy bullying is dangerous, don't pick on your friend with food allergies.
- If you want to get them a treat, make sure they can eat it! Ask your friend for the exact food they can eat and double-check with them so that they know the ingredients are safe for them.
- Play games that don't involve food! Ride bikes, play a board game, or play video games instead of games that use food.
- Don't share your food with your friends because it may include their allergen in it. We don't want them to get sick!
- Wash your hands when you finish eating, especially if you ate something your friend is allergic to!
- Tell an adult if your friend starts to feel sick or if they have the symptoms we learned about!

# Medical Alert Jewelry



**This is a bracelet, but it is a special kind of bracelet. It is a medical alert bracelet!**

Not all people with food allergies wear medical alert jewelry but a lot of people with food allergies do to stay safe.

Medical alert jewelry is any piece of jewelry: necklaces or bracelets that have medical information written on them. Normally, if a person has food allergies, they include the person's name, phone numbers to call if there was an emergency, medications they have to take, their food allergies, and instructions of what to do if they had an allergic reaction such as 'give EpiPen and call 911.' In the front of every medical bracelet for any medical condition is a **caduceus** which looks like two snakes wrapped around a staff which has wings on the top or an **asclepius** which looks like a snake with a staff. The Asclepius is a symbol that represents healing. These are **universal** medical alert symbols. Surrounding one of the symbols is something called the six-pointed star of life. This is used to represent certain things that apply to medicine such as a first aid kit!

A medical alert bracelet or necklace can be lifesaving. If someone has an allergic reaction, any person who works for the hospital, a friend, or an adult can use the medical alert jewelry to know how to help the person. Many people who work as ambulance workers called paramedics look for the medical alert jewelry when they have a patient because the medical alert jewelry tells first responders everything they need to know when treating the person.

Medical alert jewelry in the past was typically boring and plain but now many companies have created medical alert jewelry to be stylish and like any other normal jewelry. Some are mood bracelets, others are charm bracelets, some are athletic bands, and some are themed with fun designs like seashells. If you have food allergies, medical jewelry can be a fun and lifesaving addition to your wardrobe!

Noelle N.

# Empathy and Compassion

## Empathy

**Empathy** is stepping into someone else's shoes and trying to imagine what it would be like to live like them. When we imagine how someone else lives, then we can try to feel how they must feel and appreciate the things they like and dislike.

Kids with food allergies go through a lot of different challenges. Just like we talked about, they may have to read ingredients, not eat cake if they are allergic to dairy or the PB and J sandwich if they are allergic to peanut butter. We have to be empathetic and put ourselves in the shoes of our friends with food allergies so that we can understand their struggles and know that just because they have food allergies, doesn't make them different from any other kid.

**How can you show empathy to a friend with food allergies?**

### Vocabulary Alert!

**Inclusion**  
**Caduceus**  
**Asclepius**  
**Universal**  
**Empathy**  
**Compassion**



## Compassion

**Compassion** means that we care about others and we care for other people even if they look different from us, have different experiences, have different likes and dislikes, and more.

If someone has food allergies, we can show compassion by sitting at the Nut Free Table with them if we don't have any nuts for lunch. We could also show compassion for someone with food allergies by comforting them if someone made fun of them for having food allergies.

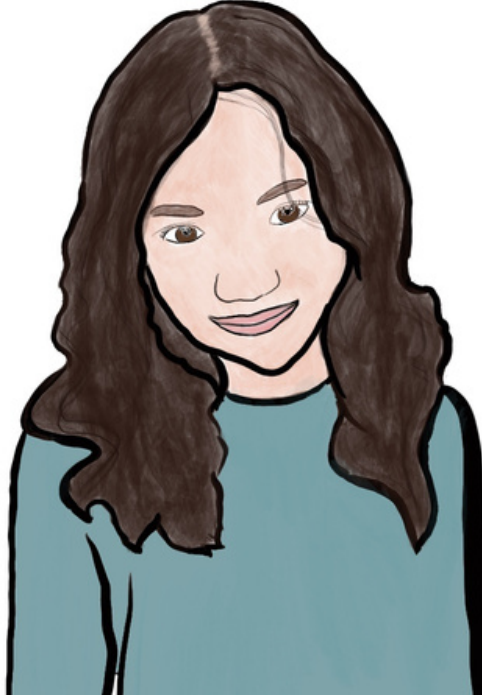
We can show compassion for anyone by saying something kind to them.

We can say something kind about our friends' new shoes or if they did a good job in a game! Even if they look different or like different things, they are still human which means we should show compassion to them.

**How can you show compassion to a friend with food allergies?**

# Stories From Food Allergy Friends

**It's story time! Now we are going to read another true story from a real kid like you with food allergies.**



Luna is in eleventh grade and she enjoys drama, baking, art, sewing, dance, crocheting, and volunteering at the Red Cross! Luna has had food allergies since she was a baby and she is currently allergic to tree nuts, peanuts, pineapple, and sulfites in addition to her non-food allergies.

“When I was in elementary school, my school had a policy of separating everyone with nut allergies into a separate table in the cafeteria. I’m not exactly sure why they did it, probably just precaution against kids wanting to share food, but it was definitely pretty isolating. I remember being the only one of my friends at the table, and while I made new friends it was really hard being one of the ‘allergy kids’. I was really glad when I switched schools and the allergy table didn’t exist anymore. A lot of things that were done for my safety were frustrating for me as a kid, but it probably would have helped if it seemed like my young classmates were also more aware of the dangers of sharing food and stuff when we were younger.”

Luna is a kid just like you. She bakes, sews, participates in dance and drama, volunteers, and more! She just also has food allergies. Like what we learned today, kids with food allergies have to go through many experiences, being alone or treated as ‘different’ being one of them. Remember, if you see a friend with food allergies alone at the allergen-free table, and you don’t have food they are allergic to for lunch or snack, go sit with them. Just like how you wouldn’t want to feel lonely, joining a friend with food allergies will help them feel less lonely and included! Let’s be empathetic and compassionate to our friends with food allergies.

# Review Time

## What did you learn today?

- **Bullying is always wrong.** It is especially dangerous to bully a person with food allergies using their allergens.
- Everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect no matter who they are, even if they have food allergies!
- Kids with food allergies go through a lot of experiences you may not even recognize!
- There are many ways we can help our friends with food allergies such as knowing how serious food allergies are, including our friend in activities, not bullying our food allergy friends, not sharing food, and washing our hands!
- Medical alert jewelry can help people with food allergies so that others know what they are allergic to in case of an emergency.
- Empathy is stepping into someone else's shoes and trying to imagine what it would be like to live how they have to.
- Compassion means that we care about others even if they look different from us, have different experiences, have different likes and dislikes, and more.
- Kids with food allergies have experienced being alone or treated as 'different' but if we treat our friends with compassion and empathy, we can help them not feel so alone.



# Day 3: Teal and the Truth

Objective: Students will learn myths and misconceptions about food allergies, how the media negatively portrays food allergies, and what teal means for food allergy awareness. Students will be able to define what an advocate is and name some of the ways people can support food allergies. Students will understand that they can be food allergy advocates.

**Day 3 Vocabulary Words:** Advocate, Assumption, Cross-Contact/Cross-Contamination, Inaccurate, Media, Misconception, and Myth.

## Today's Lessons

*Myths and the Truth*

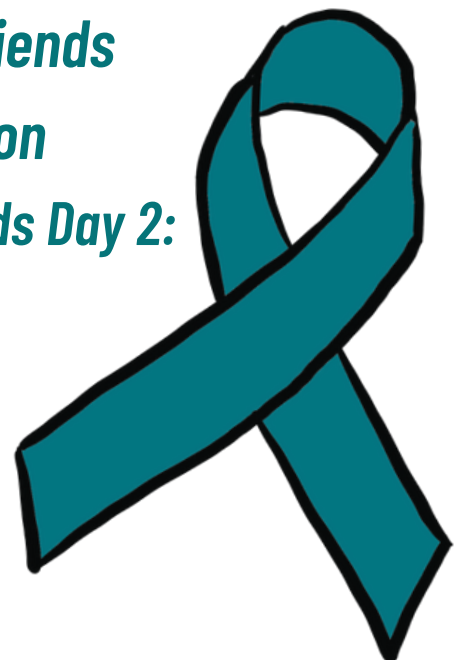
*The Media and Food Allergies*

*Supporting Food Allergy Friends*

*Empathy and Compassion*

*Stories From Food Allergy Friends Day 2:*

*Leilani and DJ*



# Myths and Misconceptions v.s. the Truth

Have you ever heard someone talk about a story that is a myth? Well, besides stories, the word **myth** has another meaning, something that has an imaginary meaning. Just like how myths are fictional stories, myths can be fictional **assumptions** or beliefs about something. A **misconception** is when someone has an understanding about something that is wrong. Such as if a person thought  $2+2=5$  their whole life.

That's not right because  $2+2=4$ ! Some things people say about food allergies are myths or misconceptions: they are not true. It is important to learn the truth about food allergies and not the myths and misconceptions other people think about food allergies.

Truth!



# Myths and Misconceptions v.s. the Truth

1. **NOT TRUE-** *Eating just a small amount of the food won't hurt:* Unfortunately, for some people who have food allergies even just a small amount of the food or just a trace can cause a very severe allergic reaction.

**Cross-Contact also incorrectly referred to as Cross-Contamination:** This occurs when an allergen is accidentally in contact with a once safe food such as when the allergen is moved from one food to another. Even that small change can cause a dangerous allergic reaction.

2. **NOT TRUE-** *Food allergies are not serious:*

As we have spoken about, food allergies are extremely serious. If someone ate a food they are allergic to, they could become very sick and in some cases, die.

3. **NOT TRUE-** *Peanuts are the most "dangerous" or "serious" allergy:*

This is not true. No food allergy is more dangerous than another. A person could be severely allergic to almost anything. In fact, almost any food can cause a severe allergic reaction.

4. **NOT TRUE-** *If you have an EpiPen then you can try a small bite of the food:*

As we said earlier, just a small bite of an allergen can cause a dangerous, deadly reaction for a person, food allergies are dangerous and while EpiPens are life saving medications, unfortunately, they aren't always guaranteed to work. If someone has a food allergy, they should not try the food they are allergic to unless authorized by a doctor because otherwise, a dangerous reaction could occur.

5. **NOT TRUE-** *Food Intolerances and Food Allergies are the same thing:*

This is not true. Some people have a food intolerance. Maybe you know someone who is lactose intolerant or has celiac disease. Food intolerances are when certain foods can make someone feel sick. A food allergy is different because food allergies can cause a life-threatening reaction which can cause someone to go to the hospital or sometimes die. Food allergies are very serious.

6. **NOT TRUE-** *As a person continues to have allergic reactions, they will get worse and worse:*

This is not true. No food allergy is more dangerous than another. A person could be severely allergic to almost anything. In fact, almost any food can cause a severe allergic reaction.

**These myths about food allergies are not true.  
What are some other myths you have heard about food allergies?**

# Food Allergies In The Media

**Sometimes, people who have allergic reactions or food allergies are shown on TV or in movies and it is often shown as a joke. Instead of taking food allergies seriously on TV, sometimes food allergies are shown as funny and something to laugh about. This is wrong and very offensive to someone with food allergies because it makes all of their struggles and challenges look like something that is not serious. This also decreases food allergy awareness because it causes people to feel that food allergies are funny and not serious. Therefore, if someone is having an allergic reaction, another person may not take it seriously.**



It has been found that because the **media** shows food allergies as funny or **inaccurate**, less people believe that food allergies are serious and they are less likely to take life-saving measures if someone with food allergies is having an allergic reaction.

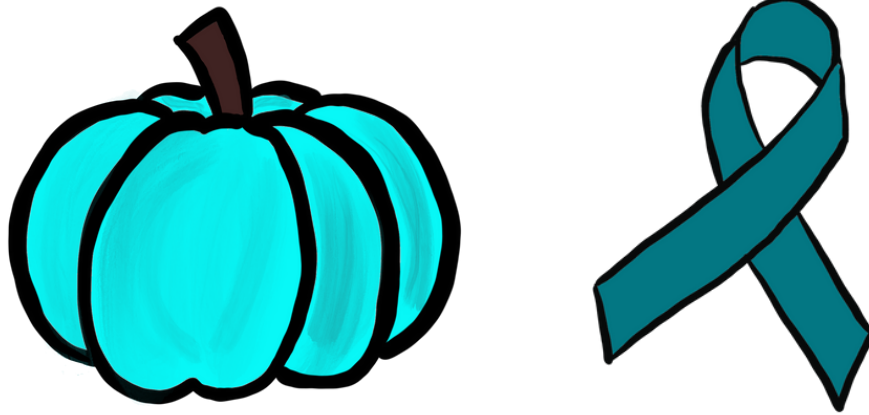
## In TV and Movies:

- Characters with food allergies shown as weak.
- Characters with food allergies are the villains.
- The weapon against characters with food allergies are their allergens
- Anaphylactic reactions are used as comedy or for humor.
- The allergic reactions are shown as not serious and don't cause any consequences.

**These are all wrong and not good or positive examples of food allergies.**

# Supporting People With Food Allergies

**Around the world, there are many ways people support others with food allergies!**



## **What does wearing teal mean for food allergies?**

Teal is the color that is now used to represent food allergies! When you wear teal it means that you support food allergy awareness and people with food allergies.

A teal ribbon is a symbol of food allergy awareness!

## **Teal Pumpkin Project**

Halloween is more difficult for kids with food allergies because many candies and treats may include their allergens. However, the Teal Pumpkin Project is where homes with a teal pumpkin leave non-food treats like toys or stickers so kids with food allergies are safe on Halloween!

(This project was started by Becky Basalone)

## **Food Allergy Awareness**

The Turn It Teal Campaign tries to light up various monuments in the color teal for food allergy awareness. They have even gotten the Empire State Building, a very famous building in the United States, lit up before for food allergies! This shows awareness for food allergies across the world.

(This project was started by Stephanie Lowe)

Food Allergy Awareness Week is a week where people raise awareness for food allergies. On food allergy awareness week, you can wear teal, teach your family members about food allergies, and participate in other food allergy awareness week activities put on by many food allergy organizations. In May we celebrate National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month so you can participate in these activities during the whole month of May!

# Now I Am A Food Allergy Advocate!

## What does it mean to be an advocate?

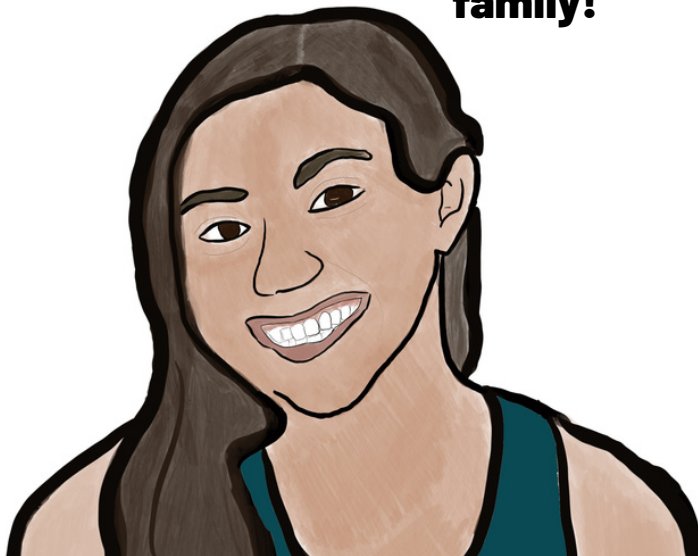
An **advocate** is someone who speaks for, stands up for, and works to help those who may not be able to speak for themselves. Advocates teach others and educate others about a situation or issue such as food allergies because they want to help people learn about it.



Now, we are food allergy advocates because we can teach others about food allergies!

# Stories From Food Allergy Friends

**These last couple days we have been reading stories about brave, smart, creative, fun, and talented food allergy friends. Now we will hear our final spotlighted stories. However, if you want to read more stories from food allergy friends, our same friends are featured at the end of the curriculum and more friends are on the Teach Teal website. Read them with your friends and family!**



Leilani is a senior in high school. She participates in dance, rocketry, and National Honors Society. Leilani has even placed as a National Finalist in two rocketry/aerospace competitions! Leilani is allergic to nuts (with some exceptions), grapefruit, and she has a sensitivity to soy.

“One day at lunch in fourth grade, one of my friends had homemade cookies that she was sharing with everyone. She said the cookies didn’t have nuts. So, I gladly took one and ate it. I went to recess after lunch and I thought I was fine since I normally react right away to my allergens. But, right before going to class, I started to feel nauseous and my skin started to itch. The school nurse gave me Benadryl, which is my standard allergy medication anytime I have an allergic reaction. I went home and saw that I had large hives all over my arms, neck, and face. After a day, the hives subsided and my skin started to clear, but I never found out what was in those cookies that made me react so badly.”

**Always remember, that if your friend has food allergies, it’s better to share a toy or play a game with them than a snack because you never know if the food will include their allergens in it!**

## D.J.'s Story

D.J. is eight years old! He likes books, theme parks, and roller coasters. D.J. plays baseball and participates in both soccer and cub scouts! D.J. was a spelling bee participant and has even won a soccer championship! D.J. is allergic to peanuts.

At Halloween when D.J. was 5 years old, he had to ask every house if the candy had peanuts in it.

# Review Time

## **What did you learn today?**

- There are many myths and misconceptions about food allergies that are wrong.
- The media often shows food allergies in ways that are inaccurate.
- There are many ways to support people with food allergies such as wearing teal for food allergy awareness, the Teal Pumpkin Project, or the Turn It Teal Campaign!
- You are now a food allergy advocate so remember to tell one person you see today a fact you learned about food allergies! Don't forget everything you learned this week about food allergies!

# Food Allergy Advocates

***There is so much to learn about food allergy awareness! From the top nine food allergens to the symptoms of an allergic reaction. Medical bracelets, empathy, compassion, and more.***

***Remember to tell all of your family and friends what you learned about food allergies because you are now a food allergy advocate! If you have food allergies, we hope you learned a little more of what you may not have known and have seen that there are so many kids with allergies just like you! You are not alone Food Allergy Friends!***



# Vocabulary

**Advocate:** To speak for (verb). A person who speaks for someone else or acts for someone else (noun).

*Sentence:* Eloise advocates for her sister who has food allergies.

**Allergen:** An allergen is a food or food protein that a person is allergic to.

*Sentence:* One of Emma's allergens is eggs.

**Allergy:** A condition where a person's body reacts differently to certain foods, products, animals, or medications.

*Sentence:* Kyle has a wheat allergy.

**Anaphylaxis:** Anaphylaxis is a severe, possibly life threatening allergic reaction which causes the immune system to release certain chemicals due to the allergen exposure.

*Sentence:* Zach had an anaphylactic reaction to walnuts.

**Asclepius:** Asclepius was Apollo's son and ancient Greek of healing and medicine. The symbol of Asclepius has a single snake wrapped on one staff.

*Sentence:* The symbol on Sean's medical bracelet was the asclepius.

**Assumption:** Ideas people have that can be correct or incorrect but are not based on facts. It is something someone believes without questioning.

*Sentence:* Issac had the assumption that his brother took his toy car since it was missing and he always asks for it.

**Benadryl:** Benadryl is a medication used for mild allergic reactions. Benadryl is an H1 blocker that includes a medication called diphenhydramine.

*Sentence:* When Lulu had a mild allergic reaction to strawberries, she took Benadryl.

**Caduceus:** In Greek mythology, it is a staff with wings on top and two snakes that cover the staff carried by Mercury. The staff is used to symbolize the medical career. This is often found on a medical alert jewelry.

*Sentence:* The Caduceus symbol is on Rose's medical alert bracelet.



# Vocabulary

**Compassion:** Compassion means that we care about others and we care for other people even if they look different from us, have different experiences, have different likes and dislikes, and more.

**Sentence:** Otto shows compassion to his friend by carrying his bag when he breaks his leg.

**Cross-Contact:** Cross Contact is when the proteins of two food products mix due to one food being in contact with another. Cooking the food doesn't reduce the chances of person having an allergic reaction after the cross-contacted food is consumed.

**Sentence:** Cross-Contact occurred when the peanut butter accidentally transferred from the knife to the jelly jar.

**Cross-Contamination:** Cross-contamination is when microorganisms like bacteria from sources contaminate food. If the food is cooked correctly, the risk of illness is taken away. Most times, people use cross-contamination and cross-contact as if they had the same meaning but they are different.

**Sentence:** Bacteria from the spoon contaminated the salmon causing cross-contamination.

**Empathy:** Empathy is being able to understand another person's feelings.

**Sentence:** Liam showed empathy for his sister Lucy when he understood how sad she was at the death of her goldfish.

**Epinephrine:** Epinephrine is a medication that is used if a person has a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. Epinephrine is also known as adrenaline. After the use of Epinephrine, 911 should be called.

**Sentence:** When Sadie had an allergic reaction to shellfish, she had to have Epinephrine.

# Vocabulary

**Histamine:** A chemical in the body's cells that is produced when the body wants to protect itself from harm. It causes allergy symptoms like runny noses and acts on a person's different body systems such as their lungs, skin, and more.

**Sentence:** There are medications that are used to fight against symptoms such as a runny nose or itchy skin that occur from the body making histamine.

**IgE antibodies:** Known as Immunoglobulin E, IgE antibodies are a protein in a person's body. This antibody that is a part of allergic reactions. Produced by the immune system, IgE antibodies are produced to fight allergens during allergic reactions.

**Sentence:** The IgE antibodies were produced during Halle's allergic reaction.

**Immune System:** The part of the body that helps fight out sickness and illness.

**Sentence:** Our immune system keeps us safe from illnesses such as the Flu or COVID-19.

**Inaccurate:** Not true, incorrect.

**Sentence:** The map was inaccurate. Instead of the park it took us to the grocery store!

**Inclusion:** Being included, a part of a group or class.

**Sentence:** The inclusion of her little brother Joey to the birthday party was kind.

**Life-threatening:** Something that has the ability to kill such as a disease or sickness.

**Sentence:** Food allergies can be life-threatening.

**Media:** The main way we can speak to large groups of people and give large groups of people information (TV, News, Internet, Radio, Magazines, and more).

**Sentence:** The news station on TV is a form of media that tells us about our world.

# Vocabulary

**Misconception:** A mistake in understanding. When someone has the wrong idea.

**Sentence:** It is a misconception that peanuts are nuts. They are actually legumes!

**Myth:** A thing, person, or story that is imagined, made up, and fake; not real. (There are many definitions of "myth" but this is the definition for the form we used).

**Sentence:** Is the story Alex told us about going to the moon yesterday a myth?

**Oral Immunotherapy:** Oral Immunotherapy is a medical supervised therapy where someone with food allergies eats small amounts of an allergen to build up their body's tolerance to it. Oral Immunotherapy must only occur if a doctor tells a person they can do it.

**Sentence:** Lucas started Oral Immunotherapy for his egg allergy.

**Symptoms:** Symptoms are changes in a person's body that typically indicate that they are sick or something is not right. A symptom can be a fever, headache, throwing up, and more.

**Sentence:** When Jacob had the flu, one of his symptoms was a fever.

**Universal:** Universal means having to do with the entire world.

**Sentence:** A heart is a universal sign for love.

**Zyrtec:** Zyrtec is a medication used for mild allergic reactions or allergy symptoms. Zyrtec is what is known as a H1 blocker is also known as cetirizine.

**Sentence:** One medication Lily takes is Zyrtec.

# Stories Continued

**Learn more about food allergies with stories from our friends!**

Noelle is in tenth grade. She enjoys learning about medicine, science, babysitting, and musical theatre. Noelle is a member of National Honor Society and she is the creator of Teach Teal! She is allergic to dairy, tree nuts, peanuts, and all cephalosporin antibiotics.

## **Oral Food Challenge/Food Allergy Experiences**

“When I was in 7th grade, I participated in an Oral Food Challenge for dairy. An Oral Food Challenge is when a person with food allergies has to try an allergen they are allergic to little-by-little in a doctor’s office with close supervision. I was nervous because I had avoided dairy for so long but now I was told to eat it. First starting with a small piece, I had to eat little bits of a muffin with milk in it while a nurse checked me during the process. Little by little, the amount of muffin I had to eat grew and by the end I had to eat a whole muffin with milk in it. That was the day I ate dairy for the first time.”

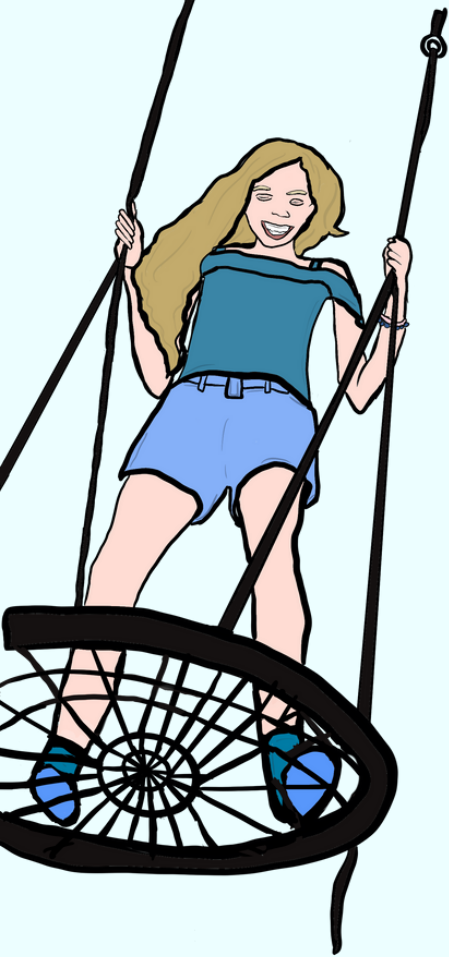
**-Noelle**

## **Allergic Reactions**

“When I was about three years old, my dad accidentally gave me a glass of cow’s milk instead of rice milk. I had to be driven to the emergency room in order to survive. I remember waking up with a needle in my arm. My mom told me that the needle sent a ghost into my body that will help me survive. This was probably my worst allergic reaction.”

**-Jadin**





### **Checking Ingredients/Allergic Reactions**

“When I was seven, I learned my lesson about the importance of making sure to always know what the ingredients in food are without assuming! I tried to be careful but didn’t really understand the importance of it. I was at my mom’s office holiday party, and there was a big selection of different desserts. I took a small cream puff, thinking that it was a normal one, but when I ate it I instantly felt my throat close and knew I had eaten something with a nut in it. My mom had to take me to the emergency room, and I was okay after lots of medicine but this really taught me the importance of checking things before I ate them; it had been a pistachio cream puff.”

**-Luna**

### **Eating Out/Allergic Reactions**

“A couple months ago, I was at a Greek restaurant where we ordered a dish with different types of dips. I should have asked what was in them, but I was really hungry and it just looked like a standard hummus. However, immediately after eating some, I felt my throat close up and knew I had eaten nuts. When we called the waiter over, he confirmed that there were walnuts in the dish. I took a Benadryl, but while my conditions weren’t worsening, they weren’t getting better either. We began getting ready to go home, when I vomited. At home, I felt miserable and sick, and had hives all over my upper body. Eventually, since my symptoms were still not getting better, my mom decided to take me to urgent care, but they were all full or closed! After a little while and more Benadryl, my symptoms finally went away.”

**-Bella**

### **Cross-Contact/Allergic Reactions**

“There were healthy snacks like smoothies, kale chips, and homemade granola being served at a school event a few years ago. Seeing that some of the food might contain nuts, I chose a fruit smoothie and a plate of kale chips. After having 3 pieces of kale chips, I felt a tingling sensation in the back of my mouth and my throat felt like it was swelling. Even though I didn’t eat any of the nuts, I still reacted to the pieces of kale chips that happened to touch some of the nuts that were mixed into it. I also forgot to bring my allergy medication. Luckily, my mom had an extra Benadryl with her. I was able to take it before my throat felt like it was closing and my nausea became too extreme. I felt better afterwards but I can’t believe I forgot to bring allergy medicine and check for nuts in the food, even if I didn’t expect it to have nuts in it at all.”

**-Leilani**

# Why Teach Teal?

***1 in 13 kids has food allergies. 32 million people in America live with life-threatening food allergies. 220 million people globally are affected by food allergies.***

**The Teach Teal: Food Allergy Awareness Program was created to teach students about food allergies. Food allergies affects so many people of all ages, backgrounds, and more, yet food allergies are not taught in schools. Since food allergies are not taught in schools, the severity of food allergies becomes undermined. More people need to be aware of what they can do to help, include, and support a person with food allergies and this education needs to start while children are young. The Teach Teal: Food Allergy Awareness curriculum will change that and will ensure that all students go out into the world knowledgable about food allergies and ready when they meet someone who lives with the daily challenges of food allergies.**



# About the Author



**Noelle Nelson is a rising junior and is a Girl Scout Senior from Southern California. During her sophomore year of high school, she created Teach Teal: Food Allergy Awareness. Noelle has had food allergies her whole life and she created "Teach Teal: Food Allergy Awareness" because she wanted more children to be taught about food allergies in schools in order for them to go out into the world knowledgable about a topic that affects so many people. Noelle plans to pursue a career in the medical field.**

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