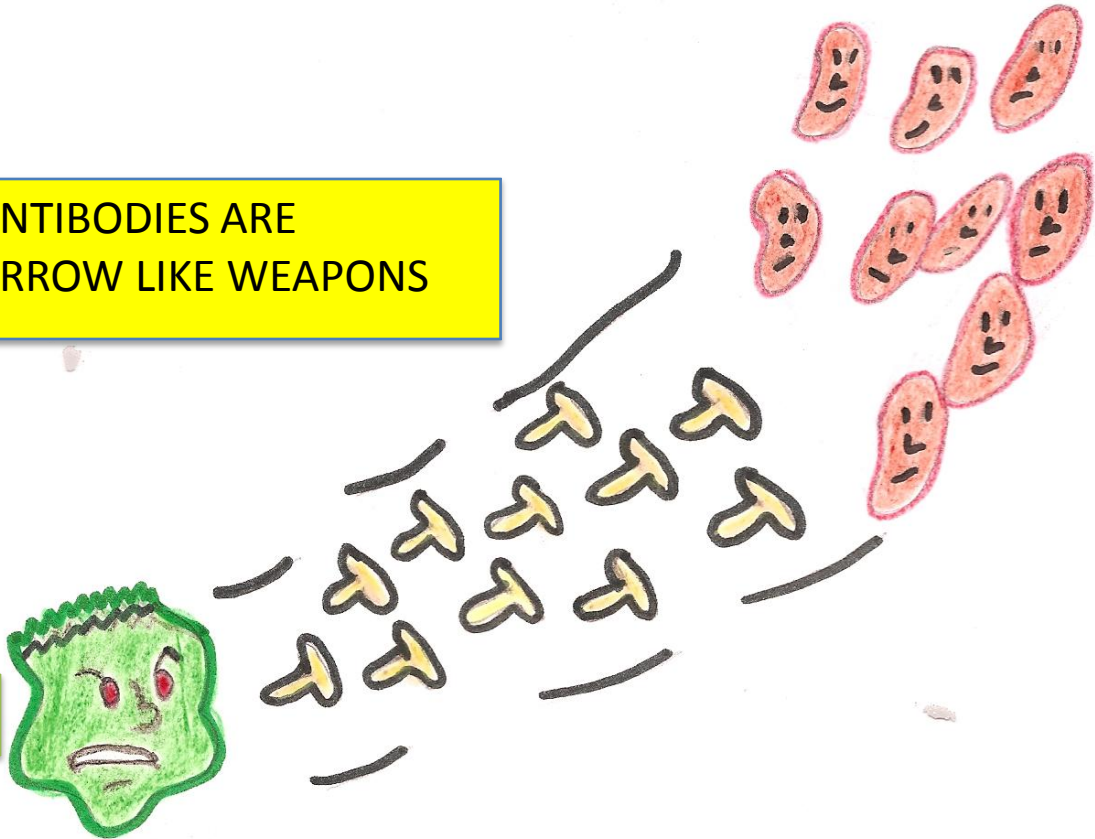


Did you know a food allergy affects the immune system?

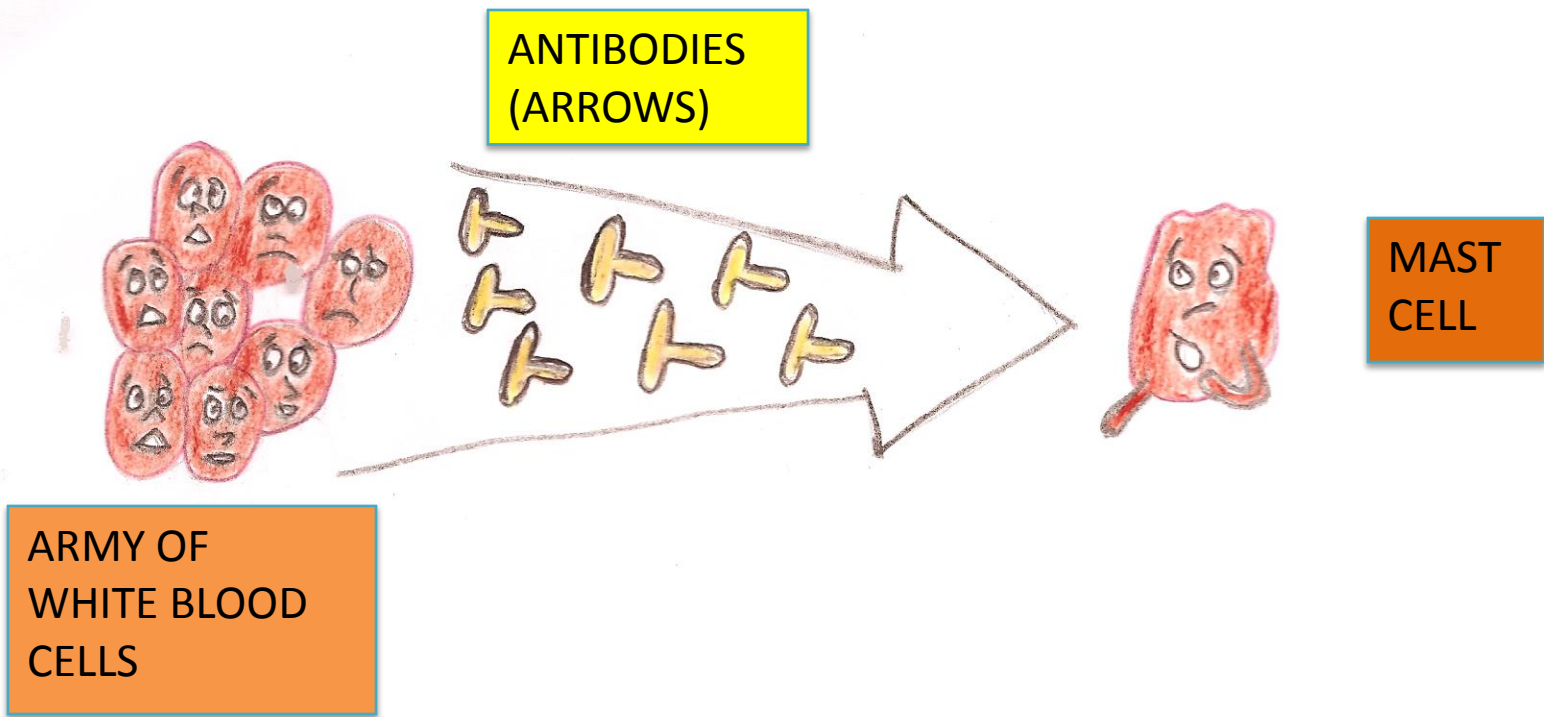
GERM

ANTIBODIES ARE
ARROW LIKE WEAPONS


ARMY OF
WHITE BLOOD
CELLS




Inside your body are things called “white blood” cells that fight germs and help us from becoming sick. These “white blood” cells are like an army waiting to fight germs that try to enter our body. This “army” attacks by sending out antibodies that stick to germs and kill them. That’s Good!!!!



Sometimes the army gets fooled and makes a mistake. The army of white blood cells gets a wrong message and makes the antibodies anyway. These antibodies start fighting the good cells in our body instead of the bad cells.



ANTIBODIES
(ARROWS)
STICKING TO
A MAST
CELL



Allergy antibodies stick to good cells called mast cells. Mast cells are found in your skin, nose, lungs and stomach.



Allergy antibodies wait in our bodies until they see certain foods they do not like. When these foods go by, the antibodies reach out and grab them! This makes the mast cell explode!! The mast cell sprays out chemicals including histamine. This results in symptoms of an allergic reaction, sometimes an anaphylactic reaction (life-threatening). Symptoms may include one or more of the following: a tingling sensation in the mouth, swelling of the tongue and the throat, difficulty breathing, hives, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness, and even death. Symptoms typically appear within minutes to two hours after the person has eaten the food they are allergic to.

The Illinois PTA Convention Body
Adopted a Resolution on children with a
food allergy in 2008.

Some of the actions identified in the
resolution are:

Resolution on children with food allergy Adopted by the 2008 Illinois PTA Convention Body

*Suggests to identifying dangers, possible solutions for PTA activities

*Incorporate food allergy and anaphylaxis into school wellness policies

*Support legislation

Action of the 2008 Illinois PTA Convention delegate body calls for the following actions:

RESOLVED: that Illinois PTA disseminate information to its constituent bodies on Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis including suggestions for identifying dangers, possible solutions and appropriate PTA activities which involve food; and be it further

RESOLVED: that Illinois PTA encourage The Illinois State Board of Education and local school districts to incorporate information on Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis into school wellness policies, including but not limited to educating staff members and parents; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the Illinois PTA and its constituent bodies support legislation which addresses concerns on Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis.

Local Unit Action Plans

- Reprint information on Food Allergies and Food Anaphylaxis in your PTA newsletter. Use the "Did You Know" portion of this document. Other resources are listed at the end of this document.
- Review your PTA's activities to assure that they are inclusive for all children, including those with medical concerns. Example: Class parties where food treats are served may pose potential health risks for children with medical conditions (food allergies, diabetes, etc.). Work with the school to come up with solutions and alternatives. Example: If your PTA sponsors a day at the ballpark, consider working with the park management to have a "peanut free day". Many minor league teams already have this annual event, which allows children with peanut allergies to attend our national pastime.
- Work with your school district to assure that appropriate policies are in place for dealing with food allergies and food anaphylaxis. These policies may also include anaphylaxis due to insect stings, diabetes, and other medical conditions. Include practices to address the social and emotional effects of medical conditions (bullying, non-participation, etc.).
- Work with your legislators to pass legislation requiring school districts to have policies in place regarding food allergies and food anaphylaxis. At publication, HB5338 had been passed in the House and was pending in the Senate (95th Illinois General Assembly).

* Work with school district to assure appropriate policies in place for food allergies and anaphylaxis. Include practices to address social and emotional effects of medical condition.

So you are probably thinking, ok, easy. For PTA activities if I want to serve something like cracker jacks or cheetos to the students, all I have to do is find an alternative snack for the peanut allergy kids or dairy allergy kids.

Unfortunately it is not that easy and this is why.....

Surface Contact for the average person



During flu season, one of the main ways of contracting the flu is by someone coughing or sneezing in their hand and then touching a door or a chair you will touch.



YUCK!
Let's wipe our hands!



Germs and a food protein are on the same concept



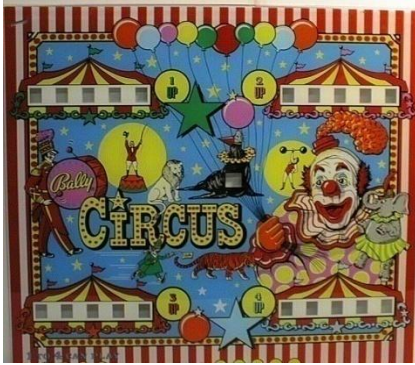
If someone has just eaten a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and then touches a doorknob, following behind is a person allergic to peanut butter and touches the doorknob and rubs their eyes, nose or mouth, they will most likely have an allergic reaction. This cross-contamination process happens just as “germs” are spread.





Another food allergen cross contamination example is that infamous bright orange cheese from cheetos. Watch out dairy allergic kids!

How does a food allergy affect the
LIFE of a child?



MOST KIDS WITH A PEANUT ALLERGY CAN NOT GO TO THE CIRCUS OR A BASEBALL GAME BECAUSE PEANUTS ARE ALL AROUND THEM.





A food allergic child has to worry about what food was eaten on the table before them. Could there be any food allergens left on the table they would like to sit and eat at?



They also have to worry when playing at the park with other kids having allergens on their hands and leaving these food proteins on park equipment.



s1057992 www.fotosearch.com

A food allergic child can not just take a piece of hair out of their mouth or rub their itching eye for fear of what can be on their hands from the many things they have previously touched.



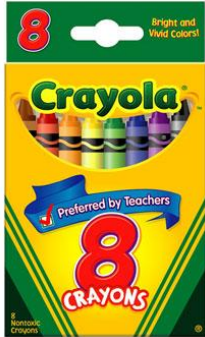
Instead they will need to wash their hands before doing something most kids do naturally.





When going on vacation, many allergic families cannot just stop at any restaurant when they get hungry, so instead they pack their meals for the car trip.

A food allergen can also be found in common household products like cosmetic items, art supplies, gardening supplies, cleaning supplies or pet food.



SOY



MILK



ALMONDS



SHELL FISH



WHEAT



GROUND PEANUT OR NUT SHELLS

Hopefully, this has helped you understand more about a food allergy and how it affects the life of a child with a food allergy!

Be sure to check with your school nurse and principal for known allergies in your school

Be careful and creative when planning PTA activities so they can be safe and enjoyable for all students.

THANKS!

