



Allergy & Anaphylaxis
Australia

Your trusted charity for allergy support

MEDIA RELEASE

Parents and teachers urged to be prepared for kids with allergies before they head back to school

Tuesday 28 January 2014: Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA) is reminding parents who have children with life threatening allergies – especially food and insect allergies - to work with school staff to prepare a tailored allergy management plan before the new school year begins.

The not-for-profit organisation – with the support of The Wiggles - is using the back to school period to encourage parents and schools to implement preventative measures to help minimise the risk of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis – the most severe form of allergic reaction.

The required individual health care plan/anaphylaxis management plan for children with severe allergy covers areas such as staff training, education of peers, management in high risk situations such as camps, parties and excursions and detailed information on how to reduce allergy risk. The tailored management plans also includes the ASCIA Action Plan that instructs staff or carers on administration of adrenaline auto-injectors such as EpiPen and Anapen when signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction are exhibited.

This is a timely reminder as the prevalence of allergies in Australian children continues to rise. Australia and New Zealand are among the countries with the highest prevalence of allergic diseases in the developed world. Approximately 4.1 million Australians have at least one allergy, and if current trends continue this will rise by seventy percent, reaching 7.7 million in 2050¹

According to Maria Said, President of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia, it is critical for schools to have specific allergy preventative measures in place as well as an emergency plan. These measures do not mean a reaction will never happen but they reduce risk to the student and increase awareness amongst staff and students generally.

“Most school staff has been trained to implement the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) Action Plan for Anaphylaxis in the event that a student has a severe allergic reaction/anaphylaxis. However, it is equally important for school staff to work with parents on an individualised anaphylaxis management plan in advance of the commencement of the school year (or as soon as possible after the start) to help minimise the risk of an allergic reaction,” said Ms Said.

Worldwide sensation Anthony Field, more famously known as the “Blue Wiggle”, is a long time ambassador of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia and advocate for allergy awareness.

In addition to helping Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia, he recently supported the launch of a new education campaign called *Anaphylaxis 101* which focuses on educating Australians about the warning signs for mild and severe allergic reactions.



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The Field family are now preparing for the 2014 school year and taking precautions to ensure their son Antonio – who suffers from nut allergies - and staff at his school are putting safety strategies in place before he enters Year 1.

“Now that Antonio is in primary school we are focused on working with his teachers to make sure he, his friends and his teachers are aware of how to best manage his food allergy. We are very thankful that we have not had to deal with an anaphylaxis since Antonio has been in school and we credit this to good preparation, education and management,” said Mr Field.

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia has information sheets and other resources for people affected by allergies and those caring for them. For more information visit www.allergyfacts.org.au

For more on the requirement for anaphylaxis management/health care plan, visit your state department of education website to view guidelines, policies and procedures.

For more information about the *Anaphylaxis 101* campaign visit www.anaphylaxis101.com.au

Note: Not all children with allergies need to be prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector. Some children have an Action Plan for Allergic Reactions and this guides carers on management when no adrenaline auto-injector is prescribed.

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Issued on behalf of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia.

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