PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION LETTER & CONSENT FORM

Prevalence of Food Allergy and Predictors of Severe Adverse Reactions to Food in Early Adolescence: SchoolNuts
HREC Project Number: 31079

Background
Childhood allergy is a major public health concern. There is evidence to suggest that food allergy in our community is increasing. While food allergy is most common in children, it’s adolescents who are most likely to have a harmful outcome from a serious allergic episode (called anaphylaxis). **But little is known about why this is.**

What is SchoolNuts doing?
We’re offering a free education session about food allergy and anaphylaxis for all year 5 and 6 or 7 and 8 students. The session will teach students how to recognise an allergic reaction and what to do in this situation. We’re also asking students and their parents to fill out a short questionnaire.

What do we want to know?
1. What knowledge and attitudes do early adolescents, aged 10-14 years, have towards food allergy?
2. What is the impact of food allergy on the quality of life for a student with a food allergy?
3. How many allergic reactions to foods are early adolescents currently having?
4. What are the factors that may contribute to early adolescents having an adverse allergic reaction to food?
5. How does the transition from primary to secondary school affect children with food allergy (and their parents)?

Why do we want to know this?
This information is important because it will allow us to:
1. Determine how common food allergy is in childhood and adolescence.
2. Understand why adolescents with a food allergy are taking greater risks and are having more severe outcomes compared to children with a food allergy.
3. Improve prevention and management strategies for food allergy in adolescents.
4. Have data from the community which will help us to improve public health policy for the prevention and management of allergy and anaphylaxis in schools.

Frequently asked questions:

| How many students will take part in this study? | Around 10,000 students aged 10-14 years and their parents, from metropolitan Melbourne, will participate in SchoolNuts. |
| Does my child need to have a food allergy to take part? | No. We need all students and their parents to take part. This includes students with a food allergy and students without a food allergy. |
| Why is my child’s school involved? | Your child attends a school that has been randomly chosen from all schools in metropolitan Melbourne to take part. |
| Does my child have to take part? | Your child doesn’t have to take part in this project if they don’t want to. If they don’t take part or withdraw from the project, it won’t affect your access to the best possible treatment and care from The Royal Children’s Hospital. |
| What sorts of questions are asked in the student questionnaire? | It asks what the students know about food allergy and asthma, and what impact these might have on them and their quality of life. It also asks questions about things like puberty, health and feelings. The questionnaire will be done at school and will take about 20-30 mins. |
| What do I need to do? | Fill in the consent form for your child to complete the questionnaire at school and return it to your child’s school or to the SchoolNuts team. Complete a parent questionnaire. It will take around 10-15 mins. |

Why do I need to complete the parent questionnaire? You don’t have to do the parent questionnaire if you don’t want to. However completing the questionnaire will provide important information on possible factors that may impact on food allergy (like family history of allergy).

What if my child has a food allergy? Is there a benefit for me? All adolescents with reported food allergy will be invited to the allergy clinic at The Royal Children’s Hospital for further assessment of their allergy status. Adolescents avoiding certain foods will also be invited to the clinic for assessment.

How do I give consent? Please choose what’s easiest for you.
- Complete the Consent Form in this pack and return it to your child’s school OR
- Complete the Consent Form in this pack and return it to the SchoolNuts team, OR
- Complete the consent online www.mcri.edu.au/schoolnuts OR

If I have any further questions, who can I ask? Call the SchoolNuts team on (03) 8341 6266 or email us at school.nuts@mcri.edu.au

Who has funded this project? National Health and Medical Research Council.
Other information about SchoolNuts:

We don’t expect there to be any risk to you or your child in completing the questionnaires. Some students may be sensitive about answering questions relating to their stage of pubertal development, but students are told that they don’t have to answer a question if they don’t want to.

Those invited into the hospital clinic for further assessment will be given more information about this and additional consent will be needed.

All the information you and your child give us will remain private. We can disclose the information only with your permission, except as required by law. We’ll use your information only for this project. Your name and your child’s name will be removed from any information you give us and we’ll use an identification number instead. We’ll keep your information in a restricted area within the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and the only people with access to your information are the research team and the RCH Ethics Committee. You have the right to access, and ask for correction of, your information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic). We’ll keep your information for 7 years, and after this time we’ll destroy it. The results of the project may be presented at conferences and published in professional journals. The results will not identify you or your child in any way.

At the end of the project, we’ll send you a summary of the results. This will be of the whole groups of participants, not individual results.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Katie Allen, FRACP, PhD
Paediatric Allergist/Gastroenterologist
Principal Researcher
SchoolNuts Study
Murdoch Childrens Research Institute
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If you have any concerns about the project, or the way it is being conducted, and would like to speak to someone independent of the project, please contact:

Director
Research Development & Ethics
The Royal Children’s Hospital
Phone: (03) 9345 5044