

Northeast Ohio
Food Allergy Network (NEOFAN):
Living Your Best Life with Food Allergies:
Understanding and Enhancing Quality of Life
for Children and Parents

Presenters: Carolyn E. Ievers-Landis, Ph.D.

& Rebecca Hazen, Ph.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologists

Division of Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrics

& Psychology

Introduction

- **We welcome you to a facilitated discussion on the following:**
 - **Understanding the concept of quality of life as it specifically applies to children with food allergies and their parents**
 - **Evaluating perceptions of allergen avoidance, emotional impact, and dietary restriction and how these affect your and your children's daily lives.**

Introduction, continued

- **Practicing problem solving to support positive adjustment by reducing barriers and successfully coping with challenges**

Food Allergy-Specific Quality of Life Domains

- **Allergen Avoidance**
- **Risk of Accidental Exposure**
- **Emotional Impact**
- **Dietary Restrictions**

Food Allergy-Specific Quality of Life: Allergen Avoidance

- Checking re whether you can eat something when eating out
- Having to tell beforehand about what you're not allowed to eat when eating out
- Hesitate eating certain foods when you doubt it is safe
- Less easily stay for a meal with someone
- Having to read labels
- Tasting or trying fewer things when eating out
- Having to explain to people around you that you have a food allergy

Food Allergy-Specific Quality of Life: Risk of Accidental Exposure

- People around you forget that you have a food allergy
- Others can eat the food you are allergic to when you do things with other people
- The label states, “May contain traces of...”
- The ingredients of a food change.
- Watching out when touching certain foods.

Food Allergy-Specific Quality of Life: Emotional Impact

- Frightened of an allergic reaction
- Frightened of eating the wrong food by accident
- Concerned that you will never get rid of your food allergy
- Feel disappointed because you have a food allergy
- Frightened of eating something you have never eaten before
- Disappointed when people don't take your food allergy into account

Food Allergy-Specific Quality of Life: Dietary Restriction

- Can eat fewer things
- Refusing food when you do things with others
- Not knowing how things taste which you can't eat
- Must always watch what you eat
- Limited in buying things you like
- Don't get anything when someone is giving treats at school

Problem Solving: Specific Practice for Food-Allergy Specific Challenges

Step 1: Problem Definition

- a) Select one problem to be discussed.
- b) One family member states their view of the problem in clear terms, using "I-statements" and avoiding accusations.
- c) Each family member reflects that view without debating or challenging it.
- d) Repeat steps "b" and "c" until each family member has had a turn.
- e) Discuss only this problem; do not bring up the past or other issues.

Problem Solving: Specific Practice for Food-Allergy Specific Challenges

- **Step 2: Listing Possible Solutions**
- a) Family members take turns listing ways to solve the problem.
- b) Be creative; anything goes!
- c) Do not evaluate the solutions suggested by each person at this time.
- d) Write down ALL solutions that are suggested; stop after 8-10 solutions.

Problem Solving: Specific Practice for Food-Allergy Specific Challenges

- **Step 3: Decision-Making**
- a) Family members rate each solution as positive (+) or negative (-).
- b) Try not to rate a solution based on who came up with it.
- c) Choose the solution(s) that has the most pluses.
- d) If necessary, combine solutions that are rated as positive.
- e) If you are unable to choose a solution, break down the problem into smaller parts and start again at Step 1.

Problem Solving: Specific Practice for Food-Allergy Specific Challenges

- **Step 4: Putting the Solution into Practice**
- a) Decide on how long the solution will be tried.
- b) Write out a plan for monitoring the success of the solution.
- c) Each family member should have a role to play in the solution.

Problem Solving: Specific Practice for Food-Allergy Specific Challenges

- **Step 5: Evaluation and Revision of the Solution**
- a) After the trial period, evaluate the success or failure of the solution.
- b) If necessary, go back through these steps until the problem is solved.

Any questions?

Appointments may be scheduled for
child therapy appointments with
Drs. Ievers-Landis or Hazen at
216-983-1282.