



Food Allergy Awareness Handbook



Food Allergy Awareness Month: May 2018 Food

Allergy Awareness Week: May 13-19, 2018

International Red Sneakers Day: May 20, 2018





Food Allergy Awareness Handbook

Red Sneakers for Oakley is dedicated to raising awareness about the dangers of food allergies and we need your help! This multimedia handbook outlines many ways you can get involved and help raise awareness throughout the month of May, and beyond...

We are all our best advocate, and we are most convincing when we have powerful statistics to quote. You will find those here. We also have great testimonials to share, they are a great way to get people to stop and think about what living with food allergies really means. And visuals: Powerful graphics to get people talking.

We engage in food allergy outreach in a variety of ways: Our school initiative, awareness events at community centers, restaurants, local businesses, even fitness gyms. We disseminate information to national media outlets, socially conscious brands (e.g., apparel, footwear, sporting goods, food products), and social influencers with broad platforms.

A cornerstone of our efforts is our presence on social media. We are active across most platforms, and you can find links to our profiles below. Simply click on the icons and you will be taken to our profiles. Much of this handbook focuses on techniques and messages YOU can use on your social media: your Facebook, your Instagram, and more. If you see an image you like, click on that too and you will be able to download it.

Thank you in advance for your support! And mark your calendars for the first annual International Red Sneakers Day on May 20th, 2018.

Note: We offer you tips, guidelines, and some advice. But remember, we are not medical professionals. Always ask your doctor/pediatrician/allergist if you have specific questions about your particular case and your allergens.





Food Allergy Truths

Prior to founding Red Sneakers for Oakley, we considered ourselves fairly aware about food allergies. But we were sadly underinformed.

What we know is that food allergies are much worse than the average person knows, they are deadly, and they are affecting millions of people.

Here are 15 things we didn't know and what we've learned:

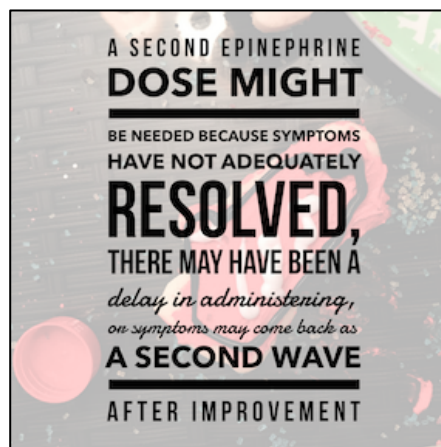
- Symptoms of anaphylaxis can sometimes take more than an hour to manifest themselves.
- Food allergy reaction symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, can often be mistaken for asthma symptoms.
- Asthma is a cofactor that affects the severity of a food allergy reaction.
- Exercise prior to ingesting an allergen has been found to exacerbate food allergy reactions. It is described as a cofactor, along with asthma, and alcohol in teens and adults.
- Prior food allergy reactions are not necessarily indicative of future reactions' severity
- When symptoms relating to two bodily systems manifest themselves after ingesting an allergen, use epinephrine. For example, hives along with vomiting, or hives with trouble breathing, are possible indicators of the onset of anaphylaxis.
- Anaphylaxis can present itself without hives.
- Epinephrine is the only first line medication for anaphylaxis. Other medicines such as antihistamines (e.g., Benadryl) might help for hives, but they cannot treat anaphylaxis.
- Epinephrine first, then call 911.





Food Allergy Truths

- Always carry two epinephrine auto-injectors. Sometimes a second dose is needed.
- In most cases of fatal food allergy reactions, there was either a delay in giving epinephrine, or it was not given at all.
- Read labels, every time. If there is no label, like with a food product from a gift basket, do not take a risk.
- Always use soap and water to clean hands or surfaces. Hand sanitizers do not remove food proteins.
- Make sure your allergist gives you the information you need to prepare an Emergency Action Plan, and keep it updated.
- Food allergy bullying is real. Talk to your kids about the importance of telling you if they are the victim of food allergy bullying at school.
- Make sure your family and friends understand the dangers of food allergies. Sometimes it might take an intervention to make them realize that exposure to a given food could lead to anaphylaxis.





Food Allergy Awareness Actions

Not a day goes by since we founded Red Sneakers for Oakley that we don't receive some sort of [testimonial](#) about our efforts and stories about how Oakley has helped save another life. Sharing the details of Oakley's life, and information about food allergy safety is SAVING lives. Here's what you can do to help us spread our message even wider:

(1) Wear **red sneakers**. Why? Because red sneakers get people talking. Red sneakers lead people to comment on your sneakers. When they compliment you on your red sneakers, tell them why you wear them. And red shoe laces, and red T-shirts can also grab attention.

"Do you know that food allergies affect 15 million Americans?..."

"I wear red sneakers to keep kids safe..."

"Let me tell you about the story of Oakley Debbs. He was an 11 year-old boy who sadly passed away because of food allergies..."

Discount coupons for sneaker purchases have been made available by Dick's Sporting Goods for Red Sneakers for Oakley and can be found [here](#).





Food Allergy Awareness Actions

(2) Organize a **Food Allergy Awareness event** at your child's school, community center, sports venue, local business. Our school program is already organizing Red Sneakers for Oakley School Days across the country and worldwide. Your event can be something as simple as playing our videos, or sharing our story, flyers and important stats, having a "dress down day" in red sneakers at your office, or getting people to give testimonials about how food allergies affect their lives. Arrange for an allergist or consultant to come speak -We work with Life Safety Solutions to provide training by certified specialists in our school program (click for more info on our [School Initiative](#)).

(3) Get yourself some **Red Sneakers for Oakley gear** to spread awareness: T-shirts, baseball caps, shoe laces, and more, are available in our shop online. And every purchase you make goes to support our awareness campaigns. [Shop Now.](#)





Food Allergy Awareness Actions

(4) Take to social media and post photos wearing red sneakers, and Red Sneakers for Oakley gear. Use the hashtags #redsneakersforoakley #livlikeoaks #foodallergyawareness. Tag us in your posts too.

(5) Share your story online of how you keep yourself safe from food allergies. Or any close calls you've had. Email us, post it on our Facebook, tweet at us, speak it out loud and clear. Be a voice to help others. One of our supporters recently shared her scary story of poorly trained emergency responders and a near fatal administration of a dairy-containing medicine to her milk allergic son. Many people who read her post were completely unaware of the information she provided.

(6) Use our awareness graphics to present and inform your friends and family about anaphylaxis and the dangers of food allergies. We have a variety of formats, sizes, and templates available for use on social media, and even in your Instagram Stories. You can find them on our website [here](https://www.redsneakers.org) and in this handbook. Need help? Send us a message at info@redsneakers.org.

(7) Make a commitment during this year's **Food Allergy Awareness Week** May 13th through 19th to do something every day that promotes awareness. No effort is too small. We are educating one parent, one child, one teacher, one caregiver, one business owner, one company, at a time. In the hopes that no other parent need suffer the loss of his or her child to food allergies.





Food Allergy Awareness Actions

(8) Participate in **International Red Sneakers Day** for Food Allergy Awareness on May 20th, 2018.

International Red Sneakers Day invites the world to participate and put on their red sneakers to bring worldwide attention to the growing affliction of food allergies.

Let's create a momentum that continues every year as more and more people participate in the day, bringing increased scrutiny into the causes of food allergies, better education on how to combat allergic reactions and most importantly more research into finding a remedy to this life threatening condition. Wear red sneakers to work, to school, to play sports or wear them just as part of your normal routine.

Over 250 million people worldwide have food allergies. This is the day for everyone who has been touched by life with food allergies to take the simple action of wearing red sneakers. This is the day that everyone stands up to eradicate food allergy illiteracy, food allergy discrimination and food allergy bullying.

Even if it is just one step, one foot forward toward that goal, it will be one step closer than before. Wear red sneakers, get a group of friends to all wear red sneakers. Take a photo and share. Hashtag **#InternationalRedSneakersDay** **#RedSneakersDay**





Food Allergy Awareness Graphics

Square Format Graphics (Click for download!)



This is a small representative sample of graphics available for desktop download in high res on our website: <https://www.sneakers.org/awareness>.





Food Allergy Awareness Graphics

Square Format Graphics



This is a small representative sample of graphics available for desktop download in high res on our website: <https://www.sneakers.org/awareness>





Food Allergy Awareness Graphics

Vertical Format Graphics (best for Facebook and Instagram Stories)



This is a small representative sample of graphics available for desktop download in high res on our website: <https://www.sneakers.org/awareness>





Food Allergy Statistics

Why is the message about the dangers of food allergies important?
Here are 10 statistics:

1 in 3 Americans has some form of allergy.

15 million people in the U.S. have food allergies.

1 in 12 children in the U.S. has a doctor diagnosed food allergy.
That's 2 in every classroom.

It is estimated that 1 in 20 adults in the U.S. (5%) has a food allergy.

25% of people with food allergies will experience near-fatal anaphylaxis at some point in their life.

The rate of people with food allergies is doubling every 10 years.

Approximately \$25 billion is spent in reactive food allergy care each year.

Every 2 minutes someone goes to the ER due to food allergy induced anaphylaxis.

Adults with food allergies have a 65% chance of passing those allergies to their children.

Having a child with food allergies increases the yearly cost of raising a child
by about 30%.

Source: Sean N. Parker Center for Allergy and Asthma Research, Stanford School of Medicine.
Click [here](#) to see their Allergy Fast Facts.





Our Story

During a family vacation in November 2016, we tragically lost our 11-year-old son, Oakley, due to a fatal anaphylactic reaction resulting from a mild nut allergy.

Oakley suffered from both asthma and nut allergies. Oakley's doctors always focused on the management process of controlling his chronically "severe" asthma, but we received little medical advice regarding Oakley's "mild" food allergies and information about potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis including the signs and symptoms of anaphylactic shock.

Shortly after Oakley's death, we decided to publicly share Oakley's story to help raise awareness about the dangers of food allergies. We immediately saw a need for awareness and founded the non-profit organization Red Sneakers for Oakley (RSFO) in memory of our son.

Oakley wore red sneakers in the multiple sports he played so it was only natural that we looked to Oakley's favorite shoes as a powerful symbol to represent the severity of food allergies.

We hope you will put on your red sneakers in support of food allergy awareness and help us honor Oakley's memory.

With gratitude,

Robert Debbs

Merrill Debbs

"Always in my heart of hearts, I knew that he would make a difference with his life - I just didn't know it would be after he passed away."

Merrill Debbs





Contact Information

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YouTube	http://bit.ly/redsneakersforoakley

Red Sneakers for Oakley is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization

