



1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Eight types of foods cause 90% of all U.S. food
3 allergies: fish, shellfish, peanuts, milk, eggs, tree nuts
4 (such as walnuts and cashews), soy, and wheat; the foods most
5 commonly causing allergies in children are eggs, milk, peanuts,
6 soy, and wheat; those most commonly causing allergies in adults
7 are fish, shellfish, eggs, peanuts, and tree nuts; children
8 often outgrow allergies to milk, egg, soy, and wheat, but adult
9 allergies generally last for life; and

10 WHEREAS, The most common method of contact with a food
11 allergen is ingestion, often unintentional, which can happen
12 particularly at restaurants; food may be prepared using the
13 same utensils or pans as an allergen-containing food, or
14 prepared near another food containing an allergen; another
15 source of unintentionally ingested allergens is side products
16 such as sauces and dressings; other methods of allergen contact
17 are inhalation and absorption after touching the skin;
18 sometimes very small quantities of an allergen can provoke a
19 dangerous reaction; and

20 WHEREAS, There are 3 major ways to have an allergic
21 reaction besides eating the allergen:

22 (1) airborne particles, where tiny pieces of the
23 allergen float through the air and a person with the
24 allergy inhales the particles, after which hay-fever-like
25 symptoms can occur; this rarely causes death but can lead
26 to severe rashes;

27 (2) transference (skin contact), where the allergen is
28 accidentally touched; this usually causes hives, but if the
29 allergen enters the blood stream through a cut, severe
30 anaphylactic shock can result, sometimes causing death;
31 and

32 (3) accidental ingestion, where allergen residue may
33 be present in careless food preparation; a person

1 accidentally eats what he or she is allergic to and suffers
2 a reaction; and

3 WHEREAS, The effects of an allergic reaction to a food
4 generally appear within 2 hours after contact with it; they can
5 include a tingling feeling in the mouth, swelling of the tongue
6 and throat, difficulty breathing, hives, vomiting, abdominal
7 cramps, diarrhea, a drop in blood pressure, loss of
8 consciousness, and even death; and

9 WHEREAS, Exposure to a food to which a person is allergic
10 sometimes results in anaphylaxis (meaning a sudden, severe
11 allergic-type reaction); anaphylaxis affects many body areas,
12 including the skin, respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract,
13 and cardiovascular system; the symptoms and health effects of
14 anaphylaxis are the same as less severe reactions, but a person
15 experiencing it must receive emergency treatment to survive;
16 persons who have asthma, eczema, or hay fever are at greater
17 risk of suffering anaphylaxis; and

18 WHEREAS, Food allergies can also cause or contribute to
19 long-term health effects; they can include acne, asthma,
20 bedwetting, diarrhea, ear infections, eczema, fatigue, hay
21 fever, headache, irritability, chronic runny nose, difficulty
22 maintaining concentration, and intestinal problems preventing
23 proper absorption of nutrients; and

24 WHEREAS, The only way to prevent an allergic reaction is to
25 avoid all contact with known food allergens; affected persons
26 must read the ingredient list before consuming any food and
27 must be sure that any food served to them has none of the food
28 allergen in it; and

29 WHEREAS, If a person with a food allergy is accidentally
30 exposed to a food allergen, quick action is essential; the drug
31 epinephrine (synthetically made adrenaline) is often used to

1 control a reaction; persons with severe food allergies can ask
2 for prescriptions for a product consisting of a syringe
3 containing epinephrine with a needle (EpiPen® or a similar
4 product) for self-injection into the thigh; depending on the
5 severity of the reaction, the affected person may also need to
6 go to an emergency room; and

7 WHEREAS, The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (a
8 private organization including health and diet professionals,
9 food and drug companies, and individuals or families affected
10 by food allergies) estimates that 11 million people in the U.S.
11 have food allergies; they include 6.5 million who are allergic
12 to fish or shellfish and 3 million who are allergic to peanuts
13 or tree nuts; the estimated prevalence of food allergies is 4%
14 in adults and 6% to 8% in children under age 3; and

15 WHEREAS, The rate of anaphylactic reactions to food in the
16 U.S. is 30 per 100,000 (0.03%) annually; anaphylactic reactions
17 cause 30,000 emergency room visits and 2,000 inpatient
18 hospitalizations per year; and allergic reactions to food kill
19 150 to 200 people per year; and

20 WHEREAS, The Illinois Department of Public Health has no
21 information on how many Illinois residents are affected by food
22 allergies; however, based on the Census Bureau's latest (2004)
23 population estimates, Illinois has about 4.33% of the U.S.
24 population; if the prevalence of food allergies in Illinois
25 mirrors the national prevalence (which may or may not be true),
26 and the estimates reported above are approximately correct,
27 then about 476,300 Illinois residents would have food
28 allergies; therefore, be it

29 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
30 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
31 we respectfully request the Department of Public Health to
32 conduct a public awareness and education campaign to make

1 Illinois residents aware of the prevalence of food allergies
2 and to provide education as to how to deal with those
3 allergies; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to
5 the Director of Public Health.