



Dear Employer,

One of your employees lives with a diagnosis of FPIES (Food Protein-Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome), an uncommon type of food allergy that affects the gastrointestinal tract. When your employee ingests his/her/their “trigger” foods, it causes a delayed reaction 2+ hours after eating the offending food. Reactions can be severe, marked by profuse vomiting, diarrhea, and often severe abdominal pain. In addition, the individual may feel very lethargic and experience a drop in blood pressure. Approximately 15-20% of FPIES reactions progress to shock, a life-threatening medical condition.

An auto-injector of epinephrine will not stop an FPIES reaction; therefore, emergency medical attention may be required in the event of a severe reaction. Upon such time, the attending Emergency Department physicians will often treat the reaction with IV fluids and potentially steroids. There is no cure for FPIES and the only management strategy for affected individuals is avoidance of the implicated foods. In addition, it is possible for individuals to discover new trigger foods over time. Because there are no available tests to determine which foods are safe or unsafe for an individual affected by FPIES to ingest, all new foods must be trialed, one single ingredient at a time. As a result, it may take some time for an individual to know which foods he/she/they are able to safely eat.

Please be receptive to any medical information regarding this condition that your employee feels comfortable sharing with you (including food trigger lists) and please be respectful of his/her/their need for privacy regarding this medical condition.

Following an FPIES reaction, the affected individual may feel unwell for a day or more. Your employee may find it helpful to work from home during this time period, have a reduced work schedule, or take sick leave. Every individual is unique, so it is important to speak with your employee about his/her/their specific needs related to living with FPIES.

Though it is impossible to guarantee that a reaction won't ever happen at work, the likelihood of an FPIES reaction occurring can be reduced with the help of some simple considerations.

1. Foster team-building and community through non-food events, like drum circles, bowling, mini-golf, or other recreational activities.
2. If there are communal eating events at work, posting ingredient lists for each of the foods offered can help an affected individual determine if he/she/they is able to eat the items provided.
3. Avoid buffet-style community eating events, as cross-contamination (i.e. when food proteins are transferred via utensils or other means to another food dish) between dishes will occur if someone accidentally places one food's serving utensil in another dish.
4. If events will be occurring at restaurants or venues that will be catered, providing the affected individual with information about all ingredients contained in the dishes to be served can help the individual make safe decisions about what he/she/they plan to eat at the event.



5. FPIES reactions can be scary and cause a detrimental impact to an individual's quality of life--- *individuals may not want to eat any food that they do not prepare themselves*. Demonstrating an understanding for this sentiment and allowing individuals to bring their own food for food-centric events can greatly reduce potential anxiety for your employee.
6. Allow your employee sufficient advanced notice about upcoming food-centric events. This can help him/her/them plan ahead and have time to determine which options allow them to feel most comfortable.
7. Present your employee affected by FPIES (as well as other employees affected by food allergic conditions) with the opportunity to help plan for or give input regarding future food-centric events.
8. Discourage and immediately address any bullying that may occur as a result of your employee's dietary restrictions. FPIES is a type of food allergy, and food allergies are classified as disabilities protected by federal law. All employees deserve the right to work in an environment free of discrimination.
9. Ensure that his/her/their workspace/desk is clear of all foods and is not used at other times of the day as a space for eating by others.
10. As with other potential emergencies, be sure to have a plan in place for how to address a medical emergency that could occur due to an FPIES reaction. Work closely with your employee so that you can best address his/her/their needs.
11. Your employee may have additional suggestions! We are sure you will be receptive to their insights, as they have experience living with FPIES and working in your work environment!

Thank you so much for taking the time to learn about FPIES and ways that you can help to support your employee affected by this life-altering condition. If you require additional resources or simply have more generalized questions about FPIES, please connect with us at The FPIES Foundation.

Best Regards,  
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Co-Directors and Co-Founders  
The FPIES Foundation  
[www.fpiesfoundation.org](http://www.fpiesfoundation.org)  
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[www.fpiesregistry.com](http://www.fpiesregistry.com)