

Why allergies are more than irritating

A toolkit designed to help your employees understand the serious health risks of allergies



Help educate employees on the impact of allergies

Allergies may not seem like a serious health concern. And, for some people, they aren't. But for millions of people around the world, allergies are deadly serious. There are many different kinds of allergies, and none of them are curable.¹ At best, they are manageable. At worst, they are debilitating and deadly.

Here are some impacts of allergies on health and healthcare costs:¹

- Allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S. The annual cost of allergies exceeds \$18 billion.
- Allergic rhinitis, also called hay fever, affects 6.1 million children and 20 million adults.
- Bad reactions to medicines/drugs may affect 10 percent of the world's population. These reactions affect up to 20 percent of all hospital patients.
- In the United States, people visit the emergency room about 200,000 times each year because of food allergies.
- Food allergies cost about \$25 billion each year.

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, occupational or work-related asthma can result in long-term lung damage, loss of productivity and disability.¹ People who suffer from allergies are more likely to develop occupational asthma. And people can become sicker at work because they can't avoid exposure to common triggers.

Suggested campaign timeline

The total campaign is designed to last three weeks but can be shortened or extended if desired. See the suggested timeline for distribution of articles, flyers, emails and additional campaign documents below.

Articles and flyers

Two types of educational information are provided for use during the campaign. Articles are intended to provide information about allergies. The flyers are generally more interactive and provide opportunities for employees to apply information about allergies in their everyday lives – at home and at work. In addition to articles and flyers, we also provide a campaign evaluation form to distribute at the end of the wellness campaign, as outlined in the email schedule on the next page.

	Articles	Flyers
Week 1: Understanding allergies	Help, I can't breathe! I may be having a food allergy!; Why doesn't my body just get used to allergens?	Basic facts about food allergies
Week 2: Types of allergies	Is it a cold, nasal allergy or allergic asthma?	Is your common cold actually a chronic allergy?
Week 3: How to manage allergies	Tips for managing food allergies at work	Diagnose, avoid, treat

What's in the toolkit?

In this toolkit, you'll find all the information needed to deliver a successful campaign:

- Campaign objectives
- Suggested campaign timeline
- Campaign kick-off event ideas
- Employee evaluation
- Campaign content

Campaign objectives

- Educate employees on the serious health risks associated with allergies
- Provide recommendations for how to manage allergies to minimize debilitating or life-threatening reactions
- Raise awareness of the dangers of food allergies, so they can be prepared to make accommodations to keep employees safe

Email campaign

The email campaign, included in this toolkit, is conveniently provided to you in the form of a Word document, making it easy to simply copy and paste the provided subject line and email body to a message to your employees.

Pre-launch email – Deploy this email the week before the campaign launch date.

Week 1 kick-off email – Deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 1. This will be the official campaign launch date. In this email, attach the Week 1 articles and flyer noted in the table above.

Week 2 email – Deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 2. In this email, attach the Week 2 article and flyer noted in the table above.

Week 3 email – Deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 3. In this email, attach the Week 3 article and flyer noted in the table above.

Follow-up email – Deploy this email on the Monday morning following the last week (Week 3) of the campaign. In this email, attach the employee evaluation form.

Campaign kick-off event

We strongly recommend an onsite or virtual event to kick off the campaign. The event can be as big or small as you want, but it's an important opportunity to introduce the campaign theme to employees and to encourage them to participate in the challenge.

If you are unable to arrange a formal kick-off event, we recommend setting up a table in a common area, such as the entrance to the employee cafeteria, for the distribution of materials. Keep materials restocked for the duration of the campaign. Making the campaign materials available online is another option.

Employee evaluation

A brief evaluation survey is available to collect feedback, ideas and information from employees who participated in the campaign. Participant feedback will be valuable for planning future campaigns.

Campaign content

1. Understanding allergies

Help, I can't breathe! I may be having a food allergy!

- Protecting yourself in the workplace
- Food allergies
- Know the difference between an allergy and intolerance

Why doesn't my body just get used to allergens?

- Your body's defense
- Types of allergies
- The mysteries of allergies

Basic facts about food allergies

- When your immune system sees food as a threat
- Common allergy symptoms to know

2. Types of allergies

Is it a cold, nasal allergy or allergic asthma?

- Importance of knowing your symptoms
- Allergic asthma

Is your common cold actually a chronic allergy?

- What is making you sneeze?
- Know the difference between colds and nasal allergies

3. How to manage allergies

Tips for managing food allergies at work

- Staying conscious of your health at work
- Navigating allergies in common workplace settings

Diagnose, avoid, treat

- Figure out what kind of allergies you have
- Make an allergens checklist
- Medications and treatments
- Planning ahead for emergencies

4. Employee evaluation

Sources:

1. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Allergy Facts and Figures, April 2022. Available from www.aafa.org.

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