

HOW A CHILD MIGHT DESCRIBE A SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION

Children have unique ways of describing their experiences and perceptions, and allergic reactions are no exception. Precious time is lost when adults do not immediately recognize that a reaction is occurring or don't understand what a child is telling them.

Some children, especially very young ones, put their hands in their mouths or pull or scratch at their tongues in response to a reaction. Also, children's voices may change (e.g., become hoarse or squeaky), and they may slur their words.

The following are examples of the words a child might use to describe a reaction:

- "This food's too spicy."
- "My tongue is hot [or burning]."
- "It feels like something's poking my tongue."
- "My tongue [or mouth] is tingling [or burning]."
- "My tongue [or mouth] itches."
- "It [my tongue] feels like there is hair on it."
- "My mouth feels funny."
- "There's a frog in my throat."
- "There's something stuck in my throat."
- "My tongue feels full [or heavy]."
- "My lips feel tight."
- "It feels like there are bugs in there." (to describe itchy ears)
- "It [my throat] feels thick."
- "It feels like a bump is on the back of my tongue [throat]."

If you suspect that a student is having an allergic reaction, follow the student's Individual Health/Emergency Plan or immediately contact the Health Office.

From *Food Allergy News*, Vol. 13, No. 2.

©2008. The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network. All rights reserved.