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NIN Special Edition – Making Headway in Food Allergy and Child Nutrition

Child nutrition is important to the National Peanut Board (NPB) and a cornerstone of the work we do. As a food that most adults fall in love with as children, peanuts and peanut butter are staple foods in many American households. In fact, 90 percent of Americans have at least one jar in their pantries. To that end, the National Peanut Board continues working with school professionals in a variety of fronts to provide menu ideas, educational materials and support for the development of successful allergy management programs. This Special Edition of News in a Nutshell is devoted to updating you on our efforts in this area.

School Nutrition Association's Annual Conference and Expo

Peanuts continue to be a regular feature on school lunch menus. Plates of PB&J sandwiches paired with fruit and popular ready-to-serve sandwiches are popular everywhere, from Texas to Georgia to Virginia. Not only that, some school districts are adding even more sophisticated offerings to their menus, such as St. Paul Public Schools in Minnesota that feature Thai Peanut Chicken with noodles at their secondary schools and the choice of a Vegan or Shrimp Pad Thai served at the Sandy Springs Friends School in Maryland.



NPB's RD Sherry Coleman Collins discusses school nutrition with SNA attendees

NPB attended the School Nutrition Association Annual Conference and Expo in Nashville, TN July 10-13. This is the premier educational and food showcase event for school nutrition professionals. Over 3,600 people attended the show and NPB was there to highlight the role that peanuts and peanut butter play in school meals. NPB partnered with USA Pears and The Peanut Institute to host a "Pearing with Peanuts" reception where sliced fresh pears were served with both a chocolate peanut butter dip and traditional peanut butter provided by Sunland to show that peanut butter can be a great vehicle food; since 64% of kids say they would eat more produce when it's paired with their favorite peanut butter dip. School nutrition directors and other professionals visited the booth during the special hour-long reception and received a special gift, met staff from NPB and The Peanut Institute and enjoyed a mid-morning snack of peanut butter

dip and pears.

This year, NPB presented new peanut menu ideas designed especially for K-12 foodservice professionals in the [Energy to Balance Taste and Nutrition booklet](#). In addition to highlighting peanuts and peanut butter in menu items for all meal periods, the booklet features the latest information about how peanut products can be an important cornerstone in the nationwide effort to improve meals served in schools. NPB staff handed out the booklet to attendees, noting many of the recipes are adapted from the USDA recipe database and are easy to implement into any school cafeteria program.



In addition to the Expo, a presentation proposal submitted by NPB was selected for the conference education sessions. "Components of an Effective Food Allergen Control Plan" provided school nutrition professionals the information they need to create plans to safely manage food allergies in the school environment. Key messages included:

- Food bans are not a best practice and not recommended by the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, the nation's top food allergy advocacy group.
- Potential food allergens can be safely served in school foodservice when proper food safety behaviors and policies are in place to prevent cross-contact.
- A comprehensive plan includes a team approach.

SNA also offered another educational session on food allergies titled "Food Allergy Breakthroughs: Keeping nutritious foods on the menu." Presenter Pamela Steele, from Duke University, discussed the status of multiple food allergy research studies. Presenter Patricia Kearney, from The Peanut Institute, addressed how to incorporate the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which encourage the consumption of many of the top eight food allergens, into school lunch while also managing food allergies. Both sessions were well-attended indicating that there continues to be a strong interest in learning more about food allergy management.

National School Nurses Association Annual Conference



School nurses play a key role in the management of childhood disease and illness in the school environment. They distribute medications for conditions like asthma, administer insulin for students with diabetes and handle cuts and scrapes from the playground – all in a day's work! Food allergy management can be yet another challenging area for these professionals. NPB realizes that food allergy is specialized area that can be confusing, with so much misinformation perpetuated on all fronts including in media coverage which tends to focus on the sensational. NPB is committed to providing balance to the conversation and being a reliable resource for healthcare professionals.

On July 1 and 2, NPB's Sherry Coleman Collins, registered dietitian and Ryan Lepicier, attended and exhibited at the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Annual Conference. Several attendees expressed their thanks and excitement that America's peanut farmers were represented. Staff answered questions about food allergies, providing one-on-one recommendations to many nurses eager for advice. One nurse expressed her distress at the situation in her school saying, "The parent of the child with food allergies insists that we remove peanuts and peanut butter, but peanut butter is the perfect snack for my students with diabetes." Follow up is ongoing with the nurses to help provide support. In all, nearly 300 school nurses visited the booth during the two day event.

NPB staff also attended several educational sessions to learn about the latest in food allergy management. One session provided an overview of forthcoming training on treating anaphylaxis; another focused on how school nurses can play a critical role in developing food allergy management plans in their school.

Trends in Schools: To Ban or Not to Ban?

While some schools are still implementing bans of potential food allergens, including peanuts, the trend is slowing. In fact, according to the School Nutrition Association's 2011 Operations Report, **more than 2/3 of schools polled have no food bans or use an alternative management plan.** Of foods banned, peanuts are the most frequently banned food. Conversations between NPB staff, school nurses and school nutrition professionals indicate that this is most often due to misinformation or lack of education by the decision makers. Managing food allergies is a sensitive issue and can be very emotional for families who have a child with an allergy.



Over 90% of children can enjoy peanuts & peanut butter.

In addition, NPB continues to reach out to school districts instituting or considering food bans to provide support and education to assist them in creating comprehensive management plans instead. One great example is the Panhandle Independent School District in Texas, where NPB was connected with Dana Ford, a concerned teacher. Dana asked for help following a memo sent to school staff informing them that the schools would be "peanut-free" this fall. In response, NPB's registered dietitian provided research, talking points and background information to help Dana communicate the facts to her district's superintendent. **As a result, the decision was reversed and peanuts and peanut butter will continue to be available in the district's schools.**

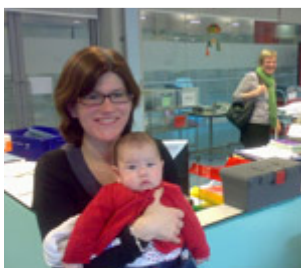
NPB recommends utilizing comprehensive programs like the school guidelines created by the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN). These expert-reviewed guidelines do not recommend food bans and focus on collaborative plans including school nutrition professionals, school nurses, administrators, parents and students.

This month NPB is supporting food allergy management training for North Carolina Public Schools foodservice administrators. This unique opportunity resulted from a presentation delivered last year on behalf of NPB by Bonnie Johnson, NPB consulting registered dietitian. This expanded program will provide detailed training for attendees during three sessions around the state. America's peanut farmers care deeply about food allergy sufferers and continue to support education, outreach and research in this important area.

Food Allergy Therapies are Closer to Becoming a Reality

The recent Scientific American article "[Bring On the Peanuts: Food Allergy Therapies Move Closer to Approval](#)" discusses major headway in food allergy research over the last 15 years – from failed experimental trials to full-fledged multi-unit studies promising answers within just a couple of years.

In the article, Robert Wood, chief of Allergy and Immunology at Johns Hopkins Children's Center states, "These oral-base therapies hold the most promise," in response to the current findings of the Duke University & Arkansas Children's Hospital peanut oral immunotherapy study. NPB is proud to fund this research and others like the ongoing LEAP & EAT studies at Kings College in the UK, which researchers hope will provide answers about how food allergies are developed and whether the timing of the introduction of potential food allergens plays a role in the development of allergies.



Clinicians at Kings College London help educate families on managing food allergy.

Part of NPB's commitment to finding solutions for food allergy sufferers was the formation of our [Scientific Advisory Council \(SAC\)](#) more than six years ago. The SAC includes a prominent group of researchers and physicians that keep NPB up-to-date on the latest allergy research, issues and potential solutions.

SAC members include professionals working on some the largest allergy studies including Lynn Christie, a registered dietitian, who works directly with family participants in the Peanut OIT study at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Dr. Gideon Lack, of King's College London and one of the most highly respected food allergy researchers, focuses his work to better understand how food allergies develop. Dr. Peter Vadas, a Canadian researcher and pediatrician, works to explore ways to prevent anaphylactic reactions from occurring. Dr. Stephen Taylor, from The Food Allergy Research and Resource Program, works to improve food allergy management practices for manufacturers. Dr.

Sohelia Maleki, a researcher with USDA ARS, and Dr. JJ Levenstein, a pediatrician who practices in southern California, also serve on the SAC.

The National Peanut Board is dedicated to the advancement of food allergy education and research. NPB has funded over \$7 million in food allergy education, research and outreach to help people learn more about food allergies, as well as to identify causes through programs, treatments and solutions for food allergy sufferers.

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National Peanut Board | 2839 Paces Ferry Road, Suite 210 | Atlanta | GA | 30339