

# How to Have a Safer, More Inclusive Valentine's Day Celebration at School



Presented by



Sponsored by



**Food allergy is a common medical condition. An estimated 5.8% of children, about 4 million K–12 students, have a diagnosed food allergy. This is an average of 2 students in every American classroom<sup>1</sup>. Allergic reactions are on the rise in children, and these events are almost always avoidable<sup>2</sup>.**

**Valentine's Day and other school celebrations may pose a risk and cause anxiety, stress, and social isolation for students with food allergies<sup>3</sup>. FARE and CVS Pharmacy have teamed up to help ensure students are safer and Valentine's Day events are more inclusive. It's good for everyone!**

## FAST FACTS:

- **1 in 4** life-threatening food allergy reactions in school settings happen in people without diagnosed food allergies.
- **1 in 13** children in the United States has food allergy, which can cause life-threatening allergic reactions<sup>4</sup>.
- In a 2-year period, about **2 out of every 5** students with food allergies have at least one allergic reaction while attending school or related activities.
- About **3 in 4** students with food allergy accidentally ingest food allergens at some point<sup>6</sup>.
- Approximately **8 in 10** food allergy reactions in schools happen in the classroom (83%), while about 15% happen in the cafeteria<sup>5</sup>.
- About **1 in 3** children have experienced bullying, teasing, or harassment about their food allergies<sup>7</sup>.

To help prevent food allergen exposure, it is important to discourage both eating in the classroom and the use of food as student incentives or as part of classroom celebrations.

## To create an inclusive, food-free FUN celebration for Valentine's Day, FARE and CVS encourage:

- Create awareness, fostering conversations about inclusivity and safety regarding food allergies ahead of time. Talk with your students and colleagues about the importance of having a celebration that helps ensure the safety and inclusion of students with food allergy.
- If giving out treats to students, consider utilizing non-food treats and encourage students to do the same. [As FARE's exclusive retail partner, CVS Pharmacy has an assortment of over 50 non-food products in stores and online that are ideal for classroom friendship exchanges.](#)
- Check all labels. Valentine's Day is a great opportunity to teach adults and children in class about food labels and how to read them. Reemphasize to children that sweets shouldn't be eaten unless a trusted adult has read the label and said it is OK.
- In case of emergency, schools should ensure that a trained staff member who is legally able to administer epinephrine is present in every building with students.
- To reduce bullying and create a safer environment for food allergic students, schools should include food allergy education in their programming. Utilize resources offered by FARE to learn about food allergies, recognize the symptoms of an allergic reaction, and minimize allergen exposure in the classroom. FARE offers free posters and instructional trainings for their [Be a PAL®](#) program for school staff, administrators, educators, coaches, parents, and students.
- Also available is the new publication, [Food Allergy Management in Schools \(FAMS\): Expert Recommendations for K–12.](#)



# How to Have a Safer, More Inclusive Valentine's Day Celebration at School



## Alternatives to Food

The CDC and FARE recommend avoiding the use of known allergens in classroom activities, such as arts and crafts, counting, science projects, parties and holiday celebrations. Using nonfood items for rewards or incentives helps create and maintain a healthy, safe, and inclusive environment for students.

**Some common classroom materials contain hidden allergens! For example, finger paints may contain milk and some crayons contain soy.**

## Some ideas for non-food treats:

- Glow sticks
- Bouncy balls
- Activity or coloring books
- Stickers
- Whistles, kazoos, or noisemakers
- Friendship bracelets
- Slinkies
- Playing cards
- Stencils
- Hair accessories or sunglasses
- Bubbles
- Pencils, pens, or markers
- Erasers or pencil toppers
- Finger puppets or novelty toys
- Bookmarks or books
- Jigsaw puzzle
- Plush toys
- Marbles or jacks



# 20% off

# CVS pharmacy®

## Classroom Exchange items at CVS!

Valid February 9–14<sup>th</sup> 2025. Look for the Classroom Exchange on [cvs.com/valentines](https://cvs.com/valentines) and enter **TEACHER20** at checkout. While supplies last.

**Disclaimer:** \*ONLINE ONLY. Coupon code required at checkout to redeem offer. Restrictions apply. Visit [cvs.com/extracare-cvs/couponpolicy](https://cvs.com/extracare-cvs/couponpolicy) for more details. **Valid 2/9/25–2/14/25**

<sup>1</sup> Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE). Estimated Food Allergy Population by State and Age Group – 2023. Accessed January 15, 2025. <https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/estimated-food-allergy-population-state-pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Foong RX, Patel NB, Turner P, Roberts GC, Fox AT. Preventing food allergy fatalities. Arch Dis Child. 2023;108(9):698-702. doi:10.1136/archdischild-2022-324911

<sup>3</sup> Patel N, Herbert L, Green TD. The emotional, social, and financial burden of food allergies on children and their families. Allergy Asthma Proc. 2017;38(2):88-91. doi:10.2500/aap.2017.38.4028

<sup>4</sup> White MV, Hogue SL, Odom D, et al. Anaphylaxis in Schools: Results of the EIPEN4SCHOOLS Survey Combined Analysis. Pediatr Allergy Immunol Pulmonol. 2016;29(3):149-154. doi:10.1089/ped.2016.0675

<sup>5</sup> Nowak-Węgrzyn A, Conover-Walker MK, Wood RA. Food-allergic reactions in schools and preschools. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2001;155(7):790-795. doi:10.1001/archpedi.155.7.790

<sup>6</sup> Hicks A, Palmer C, Bauer M, Venter C. Accidental ingestions to known allergens by food allergic children and adolescents. Pediatr Allergy Immunol. 2021;32(8):1718-1729. doi:10.1111/pai.13573

<sup>7</sup> Cooke F, Ramos A, Herbert L. Food Allergy-Related Bullying Among Children and Adolescents. J Pediatr Psychol. 2022;47(3):318-326. doi:10.1093/jpepsy/jsab099

# Printable Valentines Cards for Your Classroom



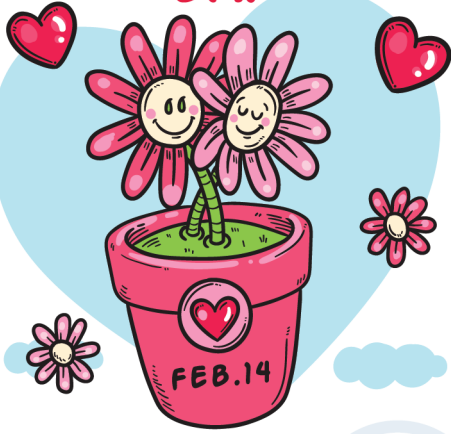
Will you be my  
♥ Valentine?



to : .....

from : .....

HAPPY  
VALENTINE'S  
DAY



to : .....

from : .....


Be Mine, Valentine ?



to : .....

from : .....

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY



to : .....

from : .....

HAPPY  
Valentine's  
DAY



to : .....

from : .....

I only have  
eyes for  
**YOU!**



to : .....

from : .....