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## Girl dies after bite of chocolate brazil nut

By Stewart Payne  
(Filed: 01/02/2006)

A girl of 12 died after mistaking a chocolate-covered brazil nut for a strawberry cream when offered a box of sweets at a homework class, an inquest was told yesterday.

Amber Norman avoided eating nuts because they had brought her out in a rash in the past. But neither she nor her family knew that her allergy could be fatal.

The box was handed round at Quilley School of Engineering, Eastleigh, Hants. Amber unwrapped the sweet and only when she bit into it did she realise it contained a nut.

She felt the effects of an allergic reaction almost immediately and telephoned her stepfather. She was instructed to come home and by the time she arrived she was struggling for breath.

She lost consciousness and her heart stopped. An ambulance was called and she was taken to Southampton General Hospital where she was found to have suffered permanent brain damage.

Five days later Amber's mother, Sandra Norman, 42, agreed that her life support should be switched off.

After the inquest, in Southampton, Mrs Norman blamed no one for her daughter's death. However, she urged manufacturers to identify with an "N" individually wrapped sweets containing nuts and sold in selection boxes.

Dr Iain Macintosh, consultant in paediatric care at the hospital, said vigorous efforts were made to revive Amber but her chances were "minimal" because she had stopped breathing for an hour.

"She was known to have a nut allergy but there had been no cases of anaphylactic shock," he said. Her GP was unaware of her condition.

"If she had come directly to hospital I think there would have been a chance she could have been resuscitated successfully," Dr Macintosh said.

"But in the case of someone who has never had anaphylactic shock it would not necessarily be your first instinct to take them to hospital."

Keith Wiseman, the Southampton coroner, recorded a verdict of death resulting from an allergic reaction to the ingestion of a sweet with a nut allergin content.

"I do not think standard verdicts are sufficient to describe what happened to Amber ... it was tragic."

Mrs Norman, said: "Parents should get children checked following the slightest thing, a small rash or anything - just make sure they are checked."

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