

## Children's Outpatient Department

# Allergy - Food Challenge

**The challenge will take place in the Medical Day Unit on Ward 16 at University Hospital, Coventry.**

**Food challenges involve testing whether a child is still sensitive to a food in a safe, controlled way. This is done by giving them increased amounts of a food, starting with very small amounts.**

**Parents will be responsible for bringing in the necessary food.**

### Observations

For the first 60 minutes of the challenge a staff nurse (with a paediatric life support certificate) will be present. The nurse will be looking for signs of adverse reaction, which are:

- Rash around the mouth;
- Urticarial rash (itchy rash);
- Sneezing;
- Vomiting;
- Irritability;
- Pallor (pale skin);
- Wheezing or coughing;
- Loose stool;
- Stridor (croup-like breathing);
- Collapse.

After the first 60 minutes your child will be checked half hourly providing a



## Patient Information

parent is present. Regular nursing observations of pulse, respiratory rate and oxygen saturations should be recorded half hourly as well as looking for all of the above.

### Stopping the challenge

If any of the above signs appear, no further food will be given and in the event of a rash, wheeze, stridor or more severe reaction a doctor will be contacted and the appropriate medication will be given.

### Food administration

The challenge food will be given at 20 minute incremental stages starting with a minute amount and building up to an appropriate portion size for a child.

Your child will be observed for a period of time following completion of the challenge. The time will vary depending on whether your child has had a reaction. You will need to stay for at least 1 hour following completion.

We aim to give you a mutually convenient date for your child's challenge at this outpatient appointment.

### On the day of the challenge please bring with you:

- The food that we are testing;
- A packed lunch for yourself and your child;
- A favourite book, toy or school work.

### Medications to be stopped before the test

If your child is on certain medications, it may interfere with the challenge and therefore needs to be stopped for a few days. Please see below:

- Short acting antihistamines such as Piriton, Phenergan and Vallergan **should be stopped two days before the test.**
- Long acting antihistamines such as Cetirizine and Loratidine **should be stopped five days before the test.**
- Your child can continue on all asthma inhalers.

## Patient Information

Please speak to the **Louise Bashford, Kate Weller or Sarah Pitts (the Allergy Nurses)** if your child is on **any other medication** or if you have any concerns or need clarification about the test and stopping the medication. Obviously if the medication cannot be stopped or must be given (as in the case of an allergic reaction) please speak to the Allergy Nurse to rearrange the challenge.

If your child has a cough, cold or high temperature then please let us know before you arrive as we may have to cancel or reschedule the challenge.

## Further Information

If you require further information, please contact the Secretary for Dr Costa and Dr Macdougall on telephone: 01788 663189. Alternatively you can contact the Allergy Nurses, via email: [childrensallergy@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:childrensallergy@uhcw.nhs.uk)

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 01788 663189 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

### Document History

Department:	Paediatrics
Contact:	33189
Updated:	May 2021
Review:	May 2023
Version:	2.1
Reference:	HIC/LFT/2179/17