

Home Food Challenge

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



To decide whether your child has a food allergy, or whether they have outgrown a food allergy, please use the advice below to do a “food challenge”. This involves giving a specified food at home in a controlled, safe way. This should only be done on the advice of a doctor or dietitian.

PICKING A GOOD TIME TO TRY THE FOOD CHALLENGE

Is your child well?

- ❖ Your child needs to be in good health and feeling well for at least five days before trying a food challenge.
- ❖ If your child has asthma or eczema, don't try a food challenge unless their symptoms are well controlled. If you are unsure please speak to your doctor, dietitian or nurse.

Does your child take antihistamines?

- ❖ It is important that your child does not have antihistamine medication in their body before trying a food challenge. Some antihistamines last longer than others.
- ❖ Don't give your child Piriton (chlorphenamine), Phenergan or Vallergan **within 48 hours** of starting a challenge.
- ❖ Don't give your child longer acting antihistamines such as Zirtek (cetirizine), Clarityn (loratidine) **for a whole week** before trying the food challenge.
- ❖ Check cough medications as some contain antihistamine.

If your child has had a reaction in the past involving any of the following mild or moderate symptoms, you should have an antihistamine available to use if needed (Piriton or cetirizine).

Mild to Moderate Symptoms

1. Tingling itchy lips or tongue.
2. Itching or flushing of the skin.
3. Hives (rash) anywhere on the body.
4. Abdominal cramps, nausea or vomiting.
5. Swollen or itchy eyes.
6. Runny nose or sneezing.

Treatment:

Give antihistamine.

If symptoms do not settle, repeat dose after 10 minutes and seek further advice from your GP or NHS 24.

Severe Symptoms

1. Sudden or increased breathlessness, may be wheezy.
2. Choking, struggling to breathe.
3. Going pale, cold and clammy.
4. Loss of consciousness or fainting.

Treatment:

- ❖ Use adrenaline pen if you have one.
- ❖ Call 999.
- ❖ Try to give an antihistamine if you can.
- ❖ Follow allergy plan if you have one.

PROCEDURE FOR HOME FOOD CHALLENGE

When trying a food challenge:

- ❖ Choose one kind of food for a challenge, don't try several at the same time.
- ❖ Rub a small amount of the food on the lower lip. Wait 10 minutes before moving to the next step.
- ❖ Give a small bite of the food, wait 15-30 minutes then repeat; increasing the amount offered by double (from crumb to pea size, to teaspoon, until you reach one portion, such as a small glass of milk, one egg, one weetabix).
- ❖ Continue regular meals and normal diet throughout the food challenge.
- ❖ Observe your child closely for at least one to two hours but be aware some allergic symptoms may develop later and up to 24 hours after the food challenge.
- ❖ If at any stage a mild to moderate allergic reaction occurs, stop the challenge and give your child an antihistamine and follow treatment advice on the previous page.
- ❖ In the unlikely event your child has a severe reaction, follow the treatment advice for severe symptoms on the previous page.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Wishaw Dietetics: 01698 366188 or

Community Dietetics: 01698 201440

Paediatric allergy service:

- ❖ 01698 366193
- ❖ or visit www.cyans.scot.nhs.uk



www.careopinion.org.uk

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NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

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Pub. date:	March 2022
Review date:	March 2024
Issue No:	07
Clinical Lead:	