

PATIENT INFORMATION

Children's oral food challenge

Information for parents / carers

Your child has been invited to come to the Short Stay Paediatric Assessment Unit (SSPAU) for a food challenge: these are performed in hospital as it is the safest way to finding out if your child reacts to a food.

Food to be used for the challenge:

Stopping antihistamine treatment before the challenge

This is so we can get a reliable result. Long acting antihistamines, including Cetirizine, Loratadine and Fexofenadine to be stopped 5 days before the challenge. Short-acting antihistamines, including Chlorphenamine to be stopped 2 days before the challenge. Some cough medicines also contain antihistamine. Please read medicine leaflet, and if you are unsure, contact SSPAU for advice.

Eczema creams, asthma medication and nasal sprays are okay and should be continued.

My child is unwell

We will only perform the challenge if your child is well enough on the day. We won't perform a challenge if they have a tummy bug, have a temperature in the last 24-48 hours or if they are wheezy or have bad hay fever. Please contact SSPAU on 01803 655492 to let us know if your child is unwell so that we can rearrange the appointment. - The Paediatric Specialist Nurse Support Worker will be in touch to reschedule.

What should I do to prepare my child for the food challenge?

Preparing your child for their visit to hospital will help them to understand what is happening and can improve your child's willingness to cooperate. Talking to your child in advance will give them time to ask any questions or voice any concerns they may have. Use familiar words that your child will understand and give truthful, factual information.

On the day of the food challenge

Your child should have a light breakfast that day. When you arrive, you will have the opportunity to ask questions, and you will be asked to sign a consent form. We try to involve the child as fully as possible in this process. Before the food challenge is started, your child will be examined and state of their general health recorded. Your child will be asked to eat or drink increasing measured amounts of at timed intervals. Throughout the challenge, a trained nurse will carefully monitor your child. Your child must stay on the ward during the challenge and for at least two hours after the challenge has stopped. The food challenge can last up to five hours but can be all day if your child is unwell during the challenge. We cannot provide a lunch on the SSPAU so do bring a packed lunch for when the challenge is completed

What are the risks?

Food challenges can cause allergic reaction, most involving the eyes, nose, mouth, skin and gut. Anaphylaxis is a more severe form of allergic reaction and can involve the air way, breathing or circulation. Anaphylaxis is unusual during a food challenge; however, we have medication on the ward to be given in this situation. You will stay on the ward until your child has fully recovered, this may be overnight.

Useful Allergy Information Websites

<https://www.allergyuk.org/> <https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/>
<https://www.theallergyteam.com/> <https://allergylifestyle.com/>
<https://www.epipen.co.uk> <https://www.eczema.org/>

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.