

Caring for your child after their peanut challenge

Information for patients, parents and guardians

Your child has had a test called a peanut challenge today in order to find out whether they are allergic to peanuts. This type of food challenge test is the most accurate way to diagnose a food allergy. It involves giving your child the food to which there is a suspected allergy in gradually increasing amounts, to see if they develop a reaction. This should only be carried out under supervision in the allergy clinic.

This factsheet provides advice on looking after your child following their peanut challenge, depending on the results of the test.

Your child did not react (negative food challenge)

Your child has not reacted to the hospital introduction of peanuts. This is known as a negative food challenge.

They should not eat peanuts for another two days. This is because of the possibility of mild, delayed symptoms such as tummy ache, diarrhoea or flare-up of eczema. Delayed symptoms are not very common and most children are fine if they do not react on the ward.

Your child is not at risk of a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis.

However, if they have an allergic reaction at home, follow your action plan and contact the paediatric assessment unit (PAU) for advice. PAU is open 24-hours a day. Tell the team about your child's symptoms and explain that they have recently had a peanut challenge.

Re-introducing peanuts into your child's diet.

If all is well after 48 hours, it's important to introduce peanuts into your child's diet to make sure they do not develop a peanut allergy in the future. Your child's healthcare team will have already discussed the importance of introducing peanuts following a negative food challenge, but if you have any further questions please don't hesitate to ask.

Your child should have three portions of peanuts per week.

A portion is:

- Half a slice of peanut butter on toast or mixed into mashed or pureed fruit.
- Two thirds of a bag of Bamba snacks (peanut flavoured corn snacks).
- Six peanuts (8g) ground and mixed into foods such as yoghurt. Never give whole nuts or pieces of nuts to children under four years.

Contact the allergy clinic to speak to the dietitian if you have problems introducing the food (if your child does not like the taste, for example).

Your child reacted (positive food challenge)

Your child has reacted during the peanut challenge. This is known as a positive food challenge.

They should continue to avoid peanuts and other nuts in their diet.

Before your child goes home you will be given an emergency treatment plan and clear instructions on how to treat an allergic reaction. We will also contact your child's GP and local hospital (if it's not this one) to let them know about the results of the peanut challenge.

If your child has a return of the allergic reaction, you should follow your allergy action plan and contact the paediatric assessment unit (PAU) for advice. The unit is open 24-hours a day.

Tell the team that your child has had a return of their symptoms following a peanut challenge.

Delayed symptoms of an allergic reaction

Sometimes, symptoms of an allergic reaction may be experienced after the food challenge.

These are known as 'delayed symptoms'.

The severity of these symptoms will vary depending on the results of the food challenge. Delayed symptoms following a negative food challenge (no reaction to the food) will be much less severe than those following a positive food challenge (when the child reacted to the food during the test).

Your child will be kept in hospital overnight if we think that they are likely to have severe allergic symptoms after the challenge.

If you have any questions or concerns about delayed symptoms, please contact the paediatric assessment unit (PAU) for advice. It is open 24-hours a day.

Useful contacts

Paediatric assessment unit (PAU): 023 8120 3744 or 023 8120 8465

John Atwell day ward: 023 8120 4511 or 023 8120 6157

If you have any questions or concerns or need dietetic advice, please contact the children's allergy team at Southampton Children's Hospital:

Allergy clinic team administrator: 023 8120 4335

Email: childrensallergy@uhs.nhs.uk

Children's allergy nurse specialists: 07557 214836

Allergy dietitians: 023 8120 6072

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy

www.allergyuk.org

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

www.uhs.nhs.uk/childrenshospital