

Caring for your child after their peanut challenge

Information for children, families and carers

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 short stay unit (PSSU) for advice. PSSU 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:

- One teaspoon of peanut butter on half a slice of 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, we will give you an emergency treatment plan and clear instructions on how to treat an allergic reaction. We will also contact your child's general practitioner (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 short stay unit (PSSU) 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 need to stay 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, contact the paediatric short stay unit (PSSU) for advice. The unit is open 24 hours a day.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the relevant details below.

Paediatric short stay unit (PSSU)

Telephone: **023 8120 4628** or **023 8120 1350** (24-hour line)

John Atwell day ward

Telephone: **023 8120 4511** or **023 8120 6157** (Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 8pm)

For dietetic advice, contact the children's allergy team:

Allergy clinic team administrator

Telephone: **023 8120 4335** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

Email: childrensallergy@uhs.nhs.uk

Children's allergy nurse specialists

Telephone: **07557 214836** (This is **not** an emergency line. Please leave a message with your name, your child's hospital number and a brief reason for your call. We will return your call as soon as we can.)

Allergy dietitians

Telephone: **023 8120 6072** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy

www.allergyuk.org

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport

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