

Home food introduction

Information for parents and carers



Home food introduction is the introduction of a food that we believe your child is either **not** allergic to or is **no longer** allergic to. Based on the allergy test results and the history that you have given us, it has been decided that the risk of reaction is very small. This means that the food can be introduced in the home environment.

Timing

- If your child has had an allergic reaction to any other food allergen, you must wait until symptoms have completely settled and at least 2 months before starting the home food introduction.
- Ensure your child has been well for 7 days. This includes no problems with eczema, asthma, or hay fever.
- This should be done in your home on a day when you have time to observe your child eating the food and for 24 hours afterwards.
- We advise to start early in the day so that you have the remainder of the day to observe for any reaction. Symptoms usually occur quickly e.g. within 5-10 minutes, but can occur up to 2 hours after the food (worsening of eczema may occur after some hours, or the next day).

Medications

- Ensure your child has not had any antihistamines (such as cetirizine or Piriton) 5 days before or during the food introduction days as these medications can delay or hide reactions. Please be aware that some cough mixtures contain antihistamines.
- Continue to give your child any other regular medications that they are taking.
- Make sure that you have easy access to your child's allergy medications in case of an immediate allergic reaction.

Food

- Only introduce one new food at a time.
- Make sure that the new food does not contain, or likely to be contaminated with, any other foods your child is allergic to or has never eaten before.
- Give the suggested quantity of food **for each stage** all at once rather than spreading it out over a few hours.

Other information

- Some children may be worried about trying new foods, especially if they have had previous bad experiences. Do not force your child to eat the food, delay the introduction until a later date if necessary.
- If at any time you are not sure if your child is having an allergic reaction, stop giving the food and observe closely for any symptoms.
- If your child has any signs of an immediate allergic reaction, stop giving the food and give the necessary medication. This type of reaction can happen within minutes, or up to two hours after eating the food.
- After completing the food introduction process, observe your child at home for 24hrs.
- Your child should not do exercise related activities during and for 2 hours after the food introduction process.

Procedure

- ☐ **Stage 1.** Give your child the tip of a teaspoon of the food to eat. Wait 30 minutes. If there is no reaction continue to next stage. **If any reaction occurs, stop the process. See section below on management of allergic reaction.**
- ☐ **Stage 2.** Give your child ¼ teaspoon of the food. Wait 30 minutes. If there is no reaction continue to next stage. **If any reaction occurs, stop the process. See section below on management of allergic reaction.**
- ☐ **Stage 3.** Give your child ½ teaspoon of the food. Wait 30 mins. If there is no reaction continue to next stage. **If any reaction occurs, stop the process. See section below on management of allergic reaction.**
- ☐ **Stage 4.** Give your child 1 teaspoon of the food. Wait 30 mins. If there is no reaction continue to next stage. **If any reaction occurs, stop the process. See section below on management of allergic reaction.**
- ☐ **Stage 5.** Give your child 2 teaspoons of the food. Wait 30 mins. If there is no reaction continue to next stage. **If any reaction occurs, stop the process. See section below on management of allergic reaction.**
- ☐ **Stage 6.** Give your child a typical portion of the food. Observe for any reaction.

Introduction process complete.

If there has been no reaction to the new food, ensure a portion is eaten at least **three times a week for the first 2 months** after the introduction process and at least **once a month** thereafter to ensure that your child does not lose tolerance to the food.

Observe your child carefully for a reaction during the process.

Mild to moderate reaction: hives, puffy eyes/face, itchy mouth, vomiting, tummy pain.

1. Stop the process.
2. Treat with oral antihistamine.
3. Avoid the food that caused the reaction until advice given by allergy team.

Severe reaction: cough, hoarse voice, shortness of breath, wheeze, feeling faint/less responsive/floppy, pale.

1. Stop the process.
2. Administer the adrenaline device if you have one.
3. Call 999 for ambulance.
4. Avoid the food that caused the reaction until advice given by allergy team.

If a reaction occurs, it useful to note down:

- The quantity of food introduced before the reaction occurred.
- The type of reaction e.g.hives (nettle rash), vomiting, tummy pain, diarrhoea.
- How quick the reaction occurred after eating the food and how long did the symptoms take to settle.
- What, if any, treatment was administered.

