

## INFORMATION LEAFLETS FOR PARENTS / CARERS OF A CHILD

# ORAL FOOD CHALLENGE



### WHAT IS AN ORAL FOOD CHALLENGE?

***An Oral Food Challenge is a test carried out:***

- To check if a specific food is causing an allergic reaction in your child
- Or
- To check if your child has outgrown an allergy to a particular food.

The food is given to your child, starting with a tiny amount, slowly increasing to a full serving. This test usually takes 5-7 hours.

Performing a food challenge in the hospital, allows us to treat any allergic reaction promptly and appropriately.

### TO PREPARE FOR THE CHALLENGE

- Your child will need to be fit and well to participate in the challenge. If your child is unwell for any reason, has been using rescue inhaler more than usual in the week before the challenge, or has been on steroid medication, please contact us.
- Do not give antihistamines (Zyrtec; Cetirizine, Piriton) during the 5 days preceding the food challenge. If your child needs antihistamines, give the medicine and call 01 409 6126 to arrange rescheduling.
- Asthma inhalers and eczema creams should not be stopped.
- If your child is on any other medication, continue giving it. If in any doubt, feel free to contact us to discuss it.

### THE DAY OF THE CHALLENGE

- Your child should have a light breakfast, e.g cereal or toast and a drink before coming to the hospital.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the hospital and to park, if necessary.
- Only bring the child who is undergoing the food challenge.
- Please bring toys, books, games for your child to play with during his/her stay.
- Bring chargers for any games, phones etc.
- Dress your child in light, non-restrictive clothing, as we will need to examine his/her skin frequently.
- Bring a change of clothes for your child.
- If you need to bring the challenge food with you, we will let you know beforehand.
- If you think that your child may be reluctant to eat the challenge food, you can bring other foods to disguise it in. (only foods that you know your child can tolerate).
- Cow's milk challenges are more successful, if milk is missed with your child's regular milk.
- Crackers or raw vegetables may make peanut butter easier to eat.
- Bring a packed lunch for after the food challenge.



### WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON THE DAY OF THE CHALLENGE

Your child will be seen by the Allergy Doctor and Nurse, who will:

- Make sure that your child is fit to undergo the food challenge.
- Discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

- You will be asked to sign a consent form.
- Your child will be weighed, have his/her blood pressure and pulse checked. We will measure the level of oxygen in his/her blood by placing a small probe (light) on a finger.
- Your child's skin will be carefully examined to check for any existing redness, hives, marks or blemishes.
- Your child will be given increasing volumes of food every 15-30 minutes.
- He/she will be checked by the nurse or doctor before each portion of food is given.
- We ask that you stay with your child throughout the challenge. You know your child best, and if you notice anything different about your child's appearance or behaviour, please inform the team as it may assist in detecting a possible reaction. The nurse or doctor will remain with your child throughout the Oral Food Challenge.

### AFTER THE CHALLENGE

The doctor will discuss the result of the Food Challenge with you, and answer any queries you may have.

If the challenge is not successful, your child should continue to avoid that food. This will be discussed in further detail prior to discharge.

At home, your child should rest and avoid any strenuous activity on the day of the food challenge. If your child shows any new symptoms after the introduction of the food, such as rash, tummy pain or vomiting, please let us know.

For more information on [Oral Food Challenge](#), please contact the Allergy Department in Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, Dublin.

#### Contact details:

- Phone Allergy Nurse 01 409 6100
- Bleep 8521 / 8530

**Remember: Ask your nurse if you are unsure about anything about your child's care.**

#### **Additional instructions**


Developed by Allergy Department

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