



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Egg Allergy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## Child Health

① For more information, please contact:

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## **What is egg allergy?**

Egg allergy is caused by an allergic reaction to egg protein. This protein is found mostly in the egg white but also in the yolk. It is common in children under 5 years and usually first noticed in infancy when egg is introduced into the diet for the first time. It is rare for egg allergy to develop in adulthood.

## **What are the symptoms?**

Commonly, egg allergic infants refuse egg-containing food. They may develop redness and swelling around the mouth after contact with egg. They may develop a rash or vomit after eating egg. Abdominal pain or diarrhoea may also occur. Some children develop a more severe reaction, with cough, an asthma-type wheeze or anaphylaxis, but this is rare.

Accidental skin contact may cause a rash, but not generalised or dangerous symptoms. Egg allergy may be responsible for worsening of eczema (this is usually harder to identify) and may also cause gastrointestinal symptoms, such as tummy pain, or loose stools/constipation.

## **Will the allergy get better?**

Egg allergy will resolve in most children, usually by school age. Egg that is well cooked (e.g., egg in a cooked cake) is less allergenic and tolerated more easily.

Tolerance is then likely to develop to lightly cooked egg (e.g., egg in pancake). Children who have had more severe reactions (e.g., with wheezing), have other food allergies or severe eczema may take longer to grow out of their allergy and in some cases, egg allergy will persist.

## **How is egg allergy diagnosed?**

The diagnosis of egg allergy is based on a history of reacting to egg containing food. Allergy skin prick tests or blood tests are sometimes used to confirm the diagnosis.

## **What is the treatment?**

Currently, the best treatment is, initially, to avoid all food containing egg. If your child can tolerate baked egg in foods, such as cake, they should continue to eat this.

Egg may be found in a wide range of foods: cakes, pastries, desserts, meat products, salad dressings, glazes, pasta, battered and bread crumbed foods, ice cream, chocolate, and sweets. This list is not exclusive and food labels must be read carefully every time you shop.

The word Egg will be listed clearly on the list of ingredients and highlighted in bold. Occasionally, egg may be referred to by unusual terms, **e.g.**, egg lecithin or albumen (especially on imported foods). The proteins in eggs from other birds are very similar to those in hens' eggs and should be avoided too. Many dishes can be made egg free, and substitutes are available.

Products useful in an egg-free diet	
Egg free products include	Egg-free mayonnaise Egg-free cakes & muffins Egg-free puddings Egg-free omelette mix
Whole egg replacers	Whole egg replacer (Allergy care) Ener-G egg replacer (General Dietary) Loprofin egg replacer (SHS) No-egg replacer (Orgran)
Egg White replacer	Loprofin egg white replacer (SHS)

Lists of egg-free foods can be obtained from many food manufacturers and supermarket chains and are helpful in the day-to-day management of the diet. Internet egg-free recipes can be useful.

Children with egg allergy should have antihistamine tablets or syrup at home and school in case of accidental ingestion/reaction. These can be prescribed but are also available without prescription from a local pharmacy. The pharmacist will advise the correct medication for your child's age.

If your child has asthma, or has had a severe allergic reaction to egg, the allergy team or GP may provide you with an adrenaline auto-injector. They will show you how to use it and provide a management plan which explains when it needs to be used. You should keep a copy with your child's medication and give copies to others, **e.g.**, nursery/school and grandparents. You should also provide emergency medication for your child's school or nursery which your doctor can prescribe.

## Can I reintroduce egg into my child's diet?

You will be advised by your doctor or dietician when to start retrying egg. For some patients who are at risk of severe reactions, this may need to be supervised in hospital. Otherwise, you will be asked to follow an egg reintroduction plan, starting with a small amount of baked egg in a cake. Introducing baked egg in this way is important in younger children, as it may help them grow out of their egg allergy. You will be given a leaflet with further information on this when it is the appropriate time.

## Can my child have their immunisations?

All children with egg allergy should receive their normal childhood immunisations, including the measles, **mumps**, and rubella vaccination (MMR) as a routine procedure performed by their family doctor/nurse. Studies on large numbers of egg allergic children show there is no increased risk of severe allergic reaction to the vaccine.

Influenza vaccine (including intranasal flu vaccine) is safe for all patients with egg allergy unless they have had an allergic reaction to egg which was severe enough to require intensive care treatment. If this is the case, you should be referred to an allergy specialist for assessment.



Yellow fever vaccine contains small amounts of egg protein and people with egg allergy who need it should be seen by an allergy specialist at a designated yellow fever immunisation centre.

## **Can I continue to breast feed my baby?**

If you are breastfeeding, any food proteins, such as egg, will also be present in your breast milk, in very small amounts. If your baby is well, with no allergic symptoms, then it is fine for you to eat egg as normal. If your baby has symptoms, such as eczema, rashes, or gastrointestinal symptoms (such as tummy pain, loose stools/constipation), which may be due to an allergy to the egg protein in your milk, then it may be useful to remove egg from your own diet for a couple of weeks to see whether your baby's symptoms improve. If there is no improvement in your baby's condition, then egg can be re-introduced back into your diet.

## **Does egg allergy mean my child is at risk of other allergies?**

Most children with egg allergy also have eczema. Egg allergy can also increase the risk of developing asthma, in some children. Allergies to other foods are more common in egg-allergic children. Egg allergic children may benefit from the early introduction of peanut to prevent peanut allergy. This can be discussed further with the allergy team.

## **If I have a child with egg allergy and then have another baby, when should I introduce egg into the baby's diet?**

The Department of Health recommends that egg can be introduced into the diet from around 6 months onward. Furthermore, the deliberate exclusion or delayed introduction of egg may increase the chance of your child developing egg allergy. If your baby develops eczema, they may benefit from the early introduction of egg at 4-6 months to prevent egg allergy developing. Giving egg in small amounts on the first few times is suggested for these infants.

**The information in this leaflet has been taken from the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) 2021 guideline for the management of egg allergy.**

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Paediatric Allergy Team, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

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## **Teaching, training, and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training, and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供，電  
或發電

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

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