



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Open Food Challenge

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

Child Health

Paediatric Allergy Specialist Nurses

Tel: 01904 721356

Mob: 07984291824

The York Hospital

Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

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When would you do an Open Food Challenge (OFC)?

The purpose of the food challenge is to find out if your child can safely eat the foods in the challenge in his/her diet at home. We have arranged the challenge because our assessment in clinic of your child's presentation and tests is not clear about the diagnosis of allergy.

Challenges are also performed to assess if a child has gained any tolerance to a food in a form that has previously caused allergy symptoms.

We have an experienced team of nurses and doctors who will ensure the challenge is performed safely and that your child is well cared for. However, your child should understand that they will be asked to eat the food we are assessing.

Why does my child need to attend hospital for the challenge?

It is necessary for your child to have the challenge in hospital because of the risk of an allergic reaction and that we may want to see what type of symptoms they develop and we may need to give your child medicine and to see a doctor straight away.

It is important to continue to avoid the food until the challenge is undertaken.

Cancellations

If you or your child does not want to go ahead with the challenge appointment or if you do not think you will be happy to include the challenge food in your child's diet please telephone the team on 07984291824.

If you do not cancel at least two weeks in advance or fail to attend, unfortunately we cannot offer you another date. Your decision will not affect your child's care in our clinic.

Is there anything I need to do prior to the Open Food Challenge?

Antihistamines must be stopped for at least 72 hours prior to the Open Food Challenge taking place as this may affect the result. You do not need to stop any other regular medication such as eye drops, asthma inhalers and nasal sprays. If you are unsure about any medications please speak to a member of the allergy team prior to the date of the Open Food Challenge.

You may be asked to provide the food for the challenge and will be required to bring it with you on the day.

Please bring your own lunch and snacks with you on the day of the challenge. Please bring food that your child has safely eaten before.

You will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you / your child agree(s) to the open food challenge and understand the information given to you.

What Happens on the day of the challenge?

When you arrive on the ward, before the challenge is started your child will be assessed to make sure they are well. They will have baseline observations recorded and paperwork completed as well as the consent form. They will also be seen by a doctor who will examine your child. If your child requires a cannula for the challenge local anaesthetic cream is applied to make this procedure more comfortable.

When the challenge commences you child will be asked to eat a small amount of the challenge food. This is then doubled every 15-30 minutes until a standard portion size is reached. They will then be observed for any signs of a reaction.

How long will an Open Food Challenge Take?

The challenge will take about three to five hours to complete, but may take longer if your child reacts or has difficulty eating the challenge food. After the final stage of the challenge is completed we will observe your child for one to two hours before he/she is discharged to ensure no delayed reactions. It is best to make provision to stay for the whole day. The play team will be available to provide things for your child to do while they are attending for their challenge but please feel free to bring your own entertainment.

What sort of reaction might my child have?

Whilst severe reactions are rare during an open food challenge mild reactions can occur. These include:

- Tingling or itching lips, tongue, throat or anywhere on the body
- Rash/Hives anywhere on the body
- Facial swelling or swelling of the lips or tongue
- Abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting

Rarely

- Difficulty breathing, wheeze or stridor
- Change in skin colour (looking pale or blue)
- Difficulty swallowing

What will happen if my child has a reaction?

If any of these reactions take place the challenge will be stopped. Appropriate treatment will be given and a period of observation will be carried out. Quick and effective treatment can be given as the challenge is taking place in the hospital setting.

What if my child will not eat the allergen being tested?

If you think there may be difficulties getting your child to eat the food in question it may be given along with something else the child likes e.g. crisps, sauce, flavoured milk etc. This can be discussed with the allergy team prior to the day of the Open Food Challenge.

Can more than one food be tested at one time?

Only one allergen can be tested for at a time.

Further appointments can be arranged to test different allergens at least one month apart.

What do I need to do after the Open Food Challenge?

After the challenge has been completed, and if successful, your child will need to continue to eat the food that has been challenged at least two to three times a week to help them maintain their tolerance. If this is not done there is a risk that your child may become re-sensitised. If this is not something you feel you will be able to do at home then it is worth considering if your child should go through with the open food challenge.

What if my child is unwell?

If your child is unwell it will increase the chances of having a severe reaction and make it difficult to ascertain whether a reaction is due to the challenge food or the illness. The challenge should therefore be postponed if your child is unwell. Please ring the allergy team for advice.

Local Contacts

Dr Thomas Verghese
Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Allergist
York Teaching Hospital HNS Foundation Trust
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Tel: 01904 725314

Dr Clare Magson
Consultant Paediatrician with an interest in allergy
York Teaching Hospital HNS Foundation Trust
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Tel: 01904 726447

Allergy Specialist Nurses
York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Tel: 01904 721356 (answer machine only)
Mob: 07984291824

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:

Stephanie Fisher, Allergy Specialist Nurse, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 721356 or email stephanie.fisher@york.nhs.uk.

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 pals@york.nhs.uk.

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 formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz

Telephone: 01904 725566

Email: access@york.nhs.uk

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Dr C. Magson, Consultant Paediatrician

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