

Food Challenge Test

Food to be challenged:

- Peanut: peanut in the shell, uncontaminated peanut butter (Skippy), peanut Bamba snack
- Tree nut: almond, hazelnut, cashew, pistachio, walnut, pecan, macadamia, pine nut
- Seeds: sesame seed, sunflower seed, mustard seed
- Egg: baked egg (1/6 egg or 1/3 egg), cooked egg (scrambled or hard boiled)
- Milk: baked milk, fresh milk
- Fish: salmon, tuna, cod, flounder, halibut
- Shellfish: crab, lobster, shrimp, scallop, oyster, mussel, clam
- Soy: soybean (edamame), soymilk
- Other:

Skin testing and allergen-specific IgE blood tests are very reliable ways to screen for food allergies. However, a monitored feeding (known as a food challenge) is the best way to both confirm a food allergy and see if your child has outgrown a food allergy.

Why has your provider recommended a food challenge tests?

- To see if your child is allergic to a specific food to which he/she had a positive allergy test but has never ingested before
- To see if you child is allergic to a food when the allergy testing and history don't correlate
- To see if your child has outgrown a food allergy

During the food challenge, your child will consume small but increasing amounts of the food and monitored very closely for any sign of allergic reaction. You and your child will remain in the office through the duration of the food challenge (about 2 hours). If an allergic reaction occurs during the test, he/she will be treated by a physician or nurse practitioner. He/she may be given medications to reverse the allergic reaction, such as epinephrine, antihistamines, steroids, and albuterol as needed.

How can I prepare for the food challenge test?

Allergic reactions can be more severe if your child is already sick. If he/she is ill, please reschedule the challenge. Similarly, if he/she is recovering from a recent asthma flare (within 1-2 weeks) or severe eczema rash, please reschedule the challenge.

Do not give your child any antihistamines for five days prior to the challenge. Keep in mind that many over-the-counter cough and cold medications also contain antihistamine. Antihistamine medications include the following:

- Allegra (fexofenadine)
- Zyrtec (cetirizine)
- Xyzal (levocetirizine)
- Claritin (loratadine)
- Benadryl (diphenhydramine)
- Atarax (hydroxyzine)

- Periactin (cyproheptadine)

If your child has asthma, continue to use the maintenance medication (such as Qvar, Flovent, Advair, Symbicort, Dulera, and montelukast).

What happens on the day of the food challenge test?

A physician or nurse practitioner and nurse will closely monitor your child while he/she ingests small amounts of the food. It is important that your child can consume the entire portion of food to be introduced, so if your appointment is first thing in the morning or afternoon, please consider skipping breakfast or lunch so that your child is hungry.

The food challenge test starts with the introduction of a very small bite of the food to be tested, followed by significantly larger servings (usually 3 doses total). In between doses, your child will be examined, and vital signs will be recorded regularly. Once your child finishes the last dose, expect to stay in the office for about 1 hour for monitoring.

What should I bring?

- You are responsible for bringing the food that will be tested to the office.
- If you were instructed to bring a nut in the shell, nuts.com has a large variety of individual nuts.
- If your child is not old enough to eat hard crunchy foods like nuts, please grind the nuts at home and bring them in separate containers (about ½ cup of each nut).
- Bring applesauce, yogurt, bananas etc. to mix with the food to be challenged in case your child does not like the taste.
- Bring juice, milk, or water to drink during challenge.
- If you were instructed to bring baked egg muffin or baked milk muffin, please follow the recipes given to you in the office. If you lost the recipe, please be sure to bring a homemade baked good (it's important we know how much milk or egg was used) and cook the food at 350 degrees or higher for 30 minutes or longer.
- Toys and distractions: You and your child will be here for several hours. Favorite toys, books, electronics, etc. will help to stay occupied.

Possible outcomes of the food challenge test:

- 1) Your child may have an allergic reaction. Most reactions triggered by a food challenge are mild, such as skin or stomach symptoms. He/she will be treated here in the office and monitored until it is safe to go home. If there is an allergic reaction, the challenge will be terminated, and your child will need to continue avoiding the food. It's possible your child will have a delayed reaction to the specific food. If he/she develops symptoms later in the day, you should bring your child back for monitoring. If a delayed reaction occurs after office hours, you may call the office line and the on-call provider will assist you.
- 2) Your child may tolerate the food. He/she will be instructed to continue eating this food to prevent future allergy or relapse. Your provider will guide you on how much to eat and how often. Rarely, a food allergy may recur after a child has passed a food challenge test. We therefore recommend that you keep the specific in his/her diet about three times per week. Recurrence of allergy has infrequently been reported, and these episodes were associated with infrequent ingestion or avoidance of peanut.

3) Your child refuses to eat a sufficient amount of the food, making the food challenge results inconclusive. In cases like this, we recommend continuing to avoid the food and repeat the challenge when your child is ready.

*For more information about food challenge tests, please visit:

<http://www.chop.edu/treatments/food-challenge-test>

<https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/allergy-library/oral-food-challenge>