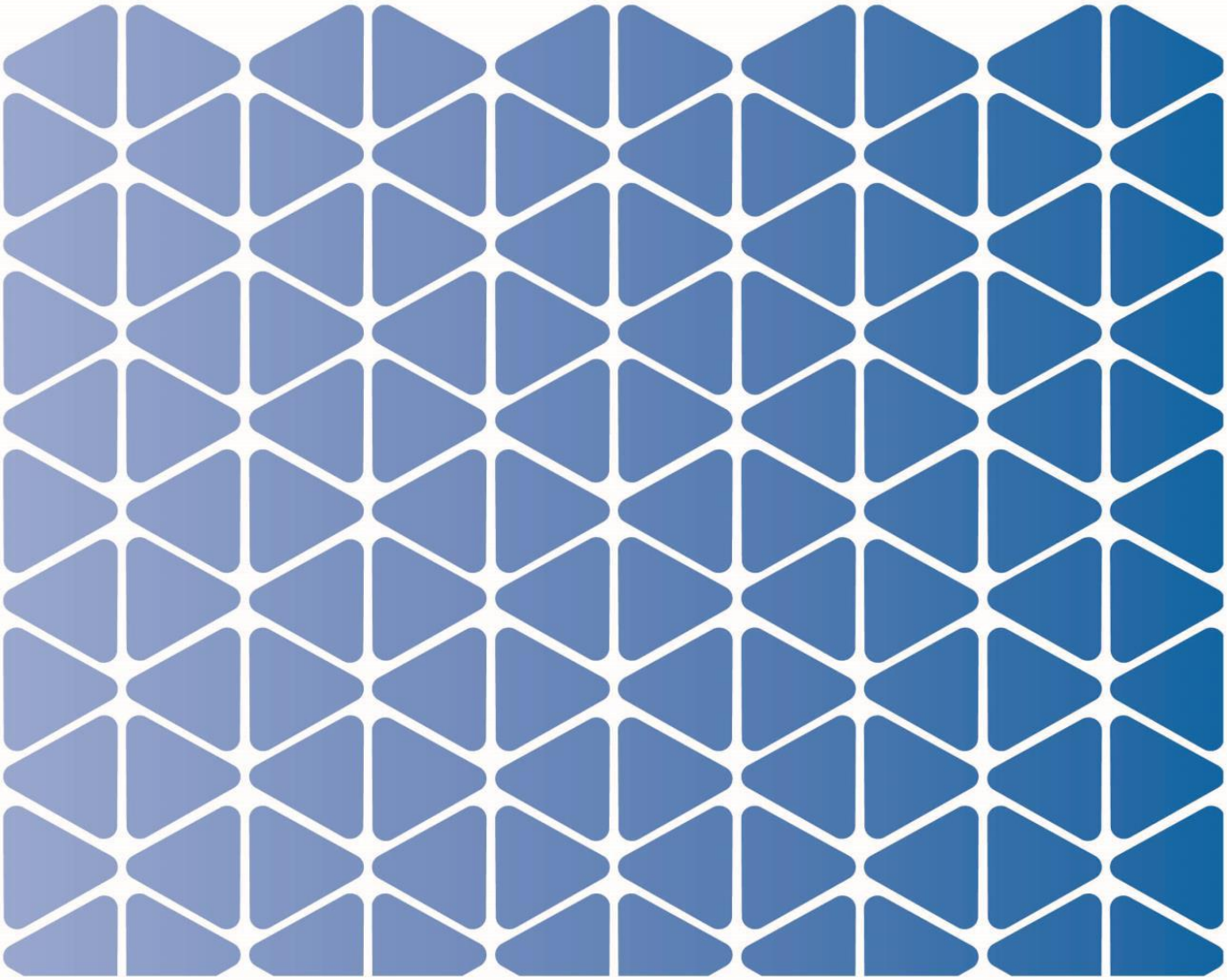
PATIENT INFORMATION

FOOD CHALLENGE – YOUNG PERSON



Food challenges are used to exclude allergy to a food. They can be carried out for several reasons and your consultant should have explained the reasons for challenging you.

You will be given the food in a controlled way, with increasing amounts given during each step under close observation.

Benefits of a food challenge

- Safely find out if you can eat a food that has previously been avoided
- Making family life easier by reducing the time spent checking labels and making eating outside the home easier
- Reduce the worry of having an allergic reaction
- Recognise the signs of an allergic reaction and how to treat it if you react while having the food challenge

Risks of a food challenge

You may have a reaction during the food challenge which is why it is carried out in hospital where reactions can be assessed, reported and treated.

Symptoms might include:

Possible Symptoms of a Reaction During a Food Challenge:		
COMMON	UNCOMMON	RARE
Itching	Swelling	Difficulty breathing
Rashes	Diarrhoea	Dizzy or sleepy
Hives	Vomiting	Anaphylaxis
Tummy ache	Runny nose or eyes	
Oral tingling	Sneezing	
	Coughing	
	wheezing	

You will be closely observed throughout the procedure and any symptoms will be detected quickly and appropriate action will be taken. Depending on the severity of any symptoms experienced the challenge will either continue, be halted temporarily, a stage repeated or aborted. We will discuss these decisions with you throughout the challenge. Medication will be given if necessary.

Mild or moderate allergic reactions will be treated with cetirizine (an antihistamine). A severe allergic reaction which involves your airway, breathing or circulation will be treated with adrenaline, which is an injection in the thigh.

Things to know before the challenge

- You should not eat for 2 hours before the challenge. The challenge will usually commence approximately 30 minutes after you arrive at the Children's Clinic so please ensure a light meal is completed at least 3 hours before you arrive.
- You will need to bring the food with you for the challenge; please ensure this is in a form that you will eat. For example, if you are having a nut challenge you may wish to bring whole nuts or nut butter. You will be advised which form we would recommend and how much to bring.
- You will be able to drink during the challenge so please bring squash with you if you prefer this to water
- As well as the food for the challenge you may also want to bring a food with you that we can use to disguise the taste of the food being challenged or may make it easier to help you eat the food. (i.e. bread to eat with peanut butter) Please make sure this is a food that you have eaten before and are able to tolerate.
- You must be well with no cough, cold or recent infections. If you have asthma or eczema this must be well controlled and stable.
- Antihistamines should be stopped for 5 days before the challenge as these can give us a false negative result.

What will happen on the day of the challenge?

On arrival you will be weighed and measured and have some observations done; pulse, respirations, blood pressure and temperature.

A skin prick test will be performed for the food we are going to challenge. Where possible we will also do a "prick-to-prick" test for the food we are about to challenge as well as the solutions that you may have also been skin prick tested to before.

The team (doctor or nurse) will ask various questions to ensure that you and your parent/carer understand the procedure and will answer any questions that you may have. If you are over 16 years old we will ask you to sign your consent form. If you are less than 16 years old we will ask both you and your parent/carer to sign.

Once the challenge commences, an increasing amount of food will be given at intervals that is decided by the medical staff and you will be closely monitored in the day case area throughout the entire test.

If no reactions occur and the challenge is completed, you will be observed for a further two hours and will then be discharged. If a reaction has occurred, we will ensure you are treated and well before discharge. This may involve being admitted to the children and young people ward, Riverbank.

After the challenge
The nurse will discuss the outcome of the challenge with you and amend your Allergy Action Plan accordingly. You will be advised whether the challenge was successful or not and the implications of this.

***Important* -if the challenge is negative and no reaction is shown you will need to eat the food ideally at least 3 times per week to ensure that your body knows that this food is something that should be eaten. If this is something that you are going to be reluctant to do, please speak to a member of staff who will explain the importance of this. If you know you are not going to eat the food regularly, we may not be able to carry out the challenge.**

Follow up after a challenge
You will be advised on the day of the challenge whether you need to be seen in Clinic for a follow up appointment. This will depend on several factors including; the result of the challenge and other allergies/conditions that you have.

Contacts
If you have any concerns or questions after reading this information you can contact:

Allergy Specialist Nurse for Children and Young People – Phoebe Moulsdale

Mobile number – 07564 848463

Extension number – 30178

Paediatrics Allergy Department

Email: wah-tr.paediatricsallergy@nhs.net

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.