



Royal Manchester Children's Hospital

Peanut Allergy

Information For Parents and Carers



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



What is peanut allergy?

It is an allergy to the peanut protein (not the oil) that causes the reaction after eating or touching the nut. Peanut allergy is common, affecting 1/100 people, or about a million people in the UK.

What are the symptoms of peanut allergy?

Symptoms usually occur straight after eating food containing peanuts but can occur up to one hour later. They tend to be mild and may include a rash (hives or 'nettle' rash) or swelling, especially around the face. Some children have an itchy throat; others vomit or have diarrhoea. Severe reactions are much less common, but include difficulty breathing (with wheeze or swelling in the throat), feeling faint or dizzy (anaphylaxis).

How serious is peanut allergy?

Most people with peanut allergy only have mild reactions. Severe reactions affecting the child's breathing can occur, **particularly in those with bad asthma** and these need urgent medical attention. More severe reactions may also occur if the child has a cold, following intense exercise, at times of stress or in teenagers after drinking alcohol.

Are there likely to be any other food allergies?

Children can be allergic to peanuts alone or may also be allergic to other nuts such as cashew and brazil; seeds such as sesame; and legumes such as lentils and peas. Seek medical advice before excluding any of these other foods as this may not be necessary.

How do we diagnose peanut allergy?

The diagnosis is based on a history of a typical reaction after contact with peanuts. Positive allergy tests skin prick or blood IgE tests support the diagnosis, but should not be used alone, as

people can have positive allergy tests but tolerate the food without getting a reaction.

Skin prick tests are safe and can be done in clinic provided that the child has not had any antihistamines for a few days. Blood tests are not affected by antihistamines, but the results are only available a week or so after the clinic appointment. If the diagnosis is uncertain an oral peanut challenge is sometimes recommended.

How to avoid peanuts?

Avoiding eating and even touching nuts is important in someone with a peanut allergy. Other names for peanuts are **ground nuts, monkey nuts, goober nuts or mixed nuts**. Always check the ingredient list on food packets.

When eating out, check the ingredients and if in doubt ask the cook who may have changed the recipe. Curries, Indian, Chinese and Thai dishes and Pesto sauce can all contain peanuts. Avoiding all nuts is probably the safest way to avoid accidental contact with peanuts, even if other nuts can be eaten.

Be more careful when on holiday abroad as foods may be unfamiliar and the ingredients list may not be in English.

In general, if peanuts are not listed in the ingredients section, foods where packaging just states 'may contain traces of nuts' can be safely eaten. In the UK and EU, packaging regulations require an accurate ingredient list. Outside the EU, regulations are different – be careful. Refined peanut oil is safe and does not need to be avoided.

How should you manage a reaction?

Children and parents will be given a written management plan in clinic and prescribed appropriate medication which should be available at all times. If a peanut is accidentally eaten spit the food out straight away and give an antihistamine as soon as possible.

Severe symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing (wheezing, noisy breathing, blue colour).
- Swelling in the throat (noisy breathing, drooling).
- Feeling faint or dizzy, looking very pale (lie the child down with their legs raised).

If any of these severe symptoms occur get help straight away and dial 999 stating 'anaphylaxis' (ana-fil-ak-sis).

Who needs to know about this allergy?

It is important to inform your child's nursery/school and after school clubs. Other carers such as grandparents, relatives and school friends' parents will also need to know.

Is peanut allergy life long?

Most children with peanut allergy will not outgrow the problem. If there has been no reaction for a long time and allergy tests to peanut are negative an oral challenge may be suggested.

Is there a cure?

There is no cure for peanut allergy at present but research is underway which may lead to the development of new treatments.

How can I contact you if I need to?

Please telephone, the Children's Allergy Team on –
0161 701 5422.

When telephoning please remember that staff are usually in clinic. If no-one is available to answer your call, please leave your name and telephone number and a short message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Where can I find more information?

- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Guidelines: Boyce C A et al. Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (JACI) 2010.
- European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology Guidelines: Muraro A et al. Allergy 2007.

We understand that there may be questions that either you or your child would like answering. Most of us forget what we were going to ask the doctor or the nurse.

Please write your questions below:

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No Smoking Policy

The NHS has a responsibility for the nation's health.

Protect yourself, patients, visitors and staff by adhering to our no smoking policy. Smoking is not permitted within any of our hospital buildings or grounds.

The Manchester Stop Smoking Service can be contacted on
Tel: (0161) 205 5998 (www.stopsmokingmanchester.co.uk).

Translation and Interpretation Service

Do you have difficulty speaking or understanding English?

আপনি কি ইংরেজীতে বুঝতে কিংবা বুঝাতে পেরেছেন ? (BENGALI)

क्या आपको अंग्रेजी बोलने या समझने में कठिनाई है ? (HINDI)

તમે ભાષા કારણે વાતચીત કરવામાં મુશ્કેલી આવે છે ? (GUJARATI)

ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਕਤ ਹੈ ? (PUNJABI)

Miyey ku adagtahay inaad ku hadasho Ingriisida aad saharnto (SOMALI)

هل لديك مشاكل في فهم اوالتكلم باللغة الانجليزية ؟ (ARABIC)

你有困難講英語或明白英語嗎？ (CANTONESE)

کیا آپکو انگریزی سمجھنے اور سمجھانے میں دقت پیش آتی ہے؟ (URDU)

☎ 0161 276 6202/6342

Peanut Allergy Guidelines – North West Paediatric
Allergy implementation group.

This information should be used in conjunction with advice
from a medical professional.



North West Allergy and Clinical Immunology Network