

Glossary

Diagnosis of suspected allergy - Typical symptoms of allergic diseases are usually enough to make a diagnosis. If there is uncertainty or precision is required, skin prick tests to confirm sensitisation to specific allergens can be performed by the allergy specialist. Testing for the allergic sensitivity is best accomplished with skin testing, although can be done with a blood test. If the diagnosis of food allergy is in question despite testing, the allergy specialist might decide to perform a food challenge.

Comprehensive allergy management planning - Managing your allergy well requires that avoidance strategies are suitable and that the plan for managing an accidental exposure or an allergic reaction is easy to follow. In the allergy service, management of eczema, food allergy, allergic rhinitis and asthma are all considered on your clinic visit.

Diagnostic food and drug challenges - If a drug is suspected to have caused an allergic reaction and taking the drug is critically important, the diagnosis of drug allergy can be explored by a drug challenge, performed in the same way as a food challenge.

Epipen training - If you or your child has been prescribed an adrenaline autoinjector pen, it is important that you know when to use it and how to use it. We provide this training.

Serotherapy for allergy driven asthma and rhinitis - Omalizumab is a monoclonal antibody that specifically binds to human immunoglobulin E (IgE). IgE is the type of immunoglobulin that is responsible for allergic reactions. By removing IgE, Omalizumab is able to reduce allergic reactivity, which in severe allergic asthma can result in fewer asthma attacks. It is given by injection and these are given in hospital.

Anaphylaxis - The most severe forms of acute allergy (severe type I hypersensitivity reactions) are labelled anaphylaxis. The word comes from the Greek: *ana* (against) and *phylaxis* (protection). There are many different definitions, creating some confusion. We regard anaphylaxis to include respiratory (breathing) or cardiac (circulatory) compromise as a result of allergen hypersensitivity.

Angioedema - Swelling of the lower layers of the skin and the layers underneath.

Urticaria - Allergic reactions involving the upper layers of the skin result in urticaria, also called hives or wheals. The allergic inflammation results in fluid leaking from the blood vessels, so that the skin swells.

Food allergies are allergic / immediate (IgE-mediated) hypersensitivities to food allergens.

Aeroallergen allergies are allergic / immediate (IgE-mediated) hypersensitivities to air-borne allergens, such as pollens, but also house dust mite and animal dander.

Latex allergy is a medical term encompassing a range of reactions to natural rubber latex: type I (allergic) hypersensitivity and also type IV (delayed) hypersensitivity.

Drug allergy is commonly described. However, there are many adverse effects of drugs that do not happen because of allergy. Some of these are drug side effects, others are interactions and some are the result of immune intolerance. Fewer than 10% of drug adverse reactions are actually allergy.

Acute and chronic urticarias - Urticarial rash is a common problem and can be unpleasant. Acute urticarias are often the result of allergy but can also be caused by infection. Chronic urticarias are rarely the result of allergy.

Hereditary angioedema (HAE) is an inherited tendency to localised swellings. The diagnosis can be made on blood tests. Unlike patients with allergy, patients with HAE do not suffer with urticaria and their swellings do not respond to antihistamines or steroids.

Skin prick testing - Allergen is introduced to a patient's skin by pricking the skin with a plastic pointer through a small amount of the allergen. A response can be read after 15 minutes. The diameter of the wheal is measured. A positive test indicates sensitivity and together with the medical history can confirm allergy.

List of allergens/reagents - Milk, Egg, Wheat, Soya, Kiwi, Peanut, Cashew, Hazelnut, Walnut, Brazil nut, Almond, Sesame, Green Pea, Prawns, as well as Grass pollen, Tree pollens, Weed pollens, Moulds, House dust mite, cat, dog, rabbit and horse danders.