

Home Food Introduction

A guide for children and their parents/carers

This leaflet explains more about home food introduction. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Why are we recommending a home food introduction for your child?

We have performed allergy tests which indicate that your child is either not allergic to or has grown out of an allergy to the specified food. We have recommended that this is introduced at home since the tests and history indicate that your child is very unlikely to have a reaction to the food.

This leaflet will guide you through the home introduction process.

Introducing foods at home

When

Ensure your child is well with no cough, cold or fever. Their eczema, asthma or hay fever should be well controlled. If your child has needed to use their salbutamol or terbutaline (blue) inhaler in the last three days, then the introduction should be delayed.

Where

Introduction should be on a day when you have time to observe your child in the home for two hours after they have eaten the food. As always, ensure that your child's emergency medications (as stated on their emergency plan) are at hand, in case of an allergic reaction.

How

Ensure that the new food does not contain, or is not contaminated with, any other foods to which your child is allergic or has not eaten before. Only introduce one food at a time and leave at least three days before introducing each new food.

To begin with, give your child a small amount (approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the portion-size you would expect your child to eat). Once your child has eaten the food, wait for 30 minutes and then proceed to give the remainder of the portion if there has not been a reaction.

Observe your child for two hours after they have completed eating the new food.

If your child refuses to eat the food, do not force them to do so.

An immediate reaction can occur within minutes or up to two hours after eating the food.

If your child has any sign of an immediate reaction, stop giving the food and give the necessary medication (as per their emergency plan). If you are unsure whether your child is having an allergic reaction, stop giving the food and observe closely for any symptoms.

Some foods can cause a delayed allergic reaction that manifests as eczema flare, loose stool or abdominal pain up to 72 hours later. These delayed (or non-IgE mediated) type of reactions are not associated with anaphylaxis or severe reactions, but may limit the amount of the food that your child can tolerate.

After a successful home food introduction

Following your child's successful home food introduction, it is safe to regularly include this new food in their diet. Often your doctor/nurse will have advised you to give the food regularly (two to three times per week) once it has been introduced to ensure tolerance is maintained.

If your child has an allergic reaction during home introduction

If your child reacted to the food being introduced, do not attempt further introductions. The food should be strictly avoided and discussed at your child's next allergy appointment.

Contact us

If you have any questions about your child's appointment, please call switchboard and ask to speak to the paediatric medicine secretaries, who will put you in touch with the doctor or nurse who saw you. The number for the hospital switchboard is **020 8672 1255**.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: PAE_HFI_02 **Published:** August 2020 **Review date:** August 2022