

Department of Allergy

Information for patients undergoing challenge testing

Doctors in the Allergy Clinic consider it necessary for you to undergo a challenge test to a food / medicine to which you have reacted to or may need in the future. Challenges are undertaken only if other ways of diagnosing your sensitivity are ineffective.

Procedure

Before the procedure, the doctor will take a full medical history and ask you detailed questions about your previous reactions.

Starting with a small amount, the challenge will involve giving you increasing doses of the food / medicine to which you are being challenged. These will be administered either by mouth or by injections under the skin of your arm. During the challenge you will remain under observation in the clinic. The test may take most of the day. Measurements will be taken of your pulse, blood pressure and peak flow (peak flow is a respiratory test). After your final dose it is necessary to remain in the clinic under observation for up to a further two hours.

Side effects

If the challenge is positive, you will have a reaction which is usually mild, for example: itchiness, reddening, a nettle-type rash or swelling. Occasionally, more serious reactions can occur such as a generalised itchy rash, asthma, itchy eyes or nasal symptoms. All these are readily treatable.

Severe reactions

Sometimes, a severe reaction can occur during the challenge and will be treated quickly by the clinic doctor. Severe reactions are the reason why it is necessary to undergo challenge in a specialised Allergy Clinic run by staff that are highly trained in the treatment of allergy.

Usefulness of the challenge

A positive challenge will provide useful information about medicines / foods to avoid in future. A negative challenge is also useful as it provides information about what you can take in future. Occasionally, a negative test will mean you have to come back for a further challenge.

Other medications

It is important to tell the doctor which medications you are taking or if you have started a new drug. Some drugs will interfere with the challenge and therefore must be stopped before the procedure. For example, Antihistamines such as piriton, telfast, cetirizine and loratadine, **must** be stopped three days before. Others such as beta-blockers (for blood pressure or heart conditions) should ideally be stopped before the challenge is started.

On the challenge day

You should have a good breakfast before you attend, as you will not be allowed to eat during the challenge until late in the day. Also, please bring some reading material with you to help pass the time.

If you are unwell

If you are unwell with a cold, flu or have a fever or if your allergic symptoms / asthma have become worse, your challenge will have to be postponed. Please telephone the clinic on 01223 216645 immediately to let them know.



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. You cannot smoke on site. For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free, 0800 169 0 169

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

Se precisar desta informação num outro idioma, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio por favor telefone para o 01223 216032 ou envie uma mensagem para: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Portuguese

Если вам требуется эта информация на другом языке, крупным шрифтом или в аудиоформате, пожалуйста, обращайтесь по телефону 01223 216032 или на вебсайт patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Russian

若你需要此信息的其他語言版本、大字體版或音頻格式，請致電 01223 216032 或發郵件到: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Cantonese

Bu bilgiyi diger dillerde veya büyük baskılı ya da sesli formatta isterseniz lütfen su numaradan kontak kurun: 01223 216032 veya asagıdaki adrese e-posta gönderin: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Turkish

এই তথ্য বাংলায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও টেপে পেতে চাইলে দয়া করে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করুন বা patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করুন।

Bengali

Document history

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