



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Peanut and Tree Nut Allergy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Child Health

① For more information, please contact:

Paediatric Allergy Specialist Nurses

Mob: 07984291824

The York Hospital
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Contents	Page
What is a nut allergy?	3
What is the difference between peanuts and tree nuts? 3	
What are the signs and symptoms of a nut allergy?	4
Allergy testing.....	5
How serious is peanut allergy?.....	5
Management of reactions	5
How do you manage a nut allergy?	6
Nut allergy and asthma.....	7
How can risks with nut allergy be reduced?.....	8-11
Is peanut allergy life long?.....	11
The 'Nuts and Bolts' of a nut allergy for the young person	12
Helpful sites.....	13
Local Contacts.....	14
Tell us what you think of this leaflet	15
Teaching, training and research.....	15
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).....	15

What is a nut allergy?

A nut allergy is when the body reacts abnormally to the proteins in nuts.

What is the difference between peanuts and tree nuts?

Peanut

Peanuts are not officially a nut but are a member of the legume family. Peanuts are related to other legumes such as peas, beans, lupin and lentils. This does not mean these foods are not safe to try. We would not routinely advice avoidance of other legumes unless your child is known to react to these. If they do have any symptoms on eating, follow their allergy management plan and avoid until your next allergy appointment.

Tree Nuts

Tree nuts include a variety of nuts including almonds, brazil nuts, cashew nuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts. There is a possibility that there may be cross reactivity with different types of tree nuts. Some people may only be allergic to one type of nut, and some people have multiple nut and legume allergies.

Always seek medical advice before excluding additional foods as this may not be necessary.

What are the signs and symptoms of a nut allergy?

Symptoms usually occur straight after eating the food although can occur up to one hour later.

Mild to moderate symptoms may include:

- Itchy, tingling sensation of lips, tongue and throat
- Itchy nettle rash or bigger rash (urticaria)
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Swelling of lips, eyes and face

Less common, severe symptoms (anaphylaxis) may include:

- Swelling or tightening of the throat, tongue and airway
- Change in voice or hoarseness
- Difficult/noisy breathing (wheezing)
- Light headedness, dizziness
- Faint and collapse

Anaphylaxis is the name given to a severe life threatening reaction. Not all nut allergic people will experience anaphylaxis. People with asthma are at greater risk of developing a severe reaction.

Allergy testing

Allergy tests may include skin prick testing or blood tests for specific IgE. The higher the test result the more certain you are allergic to the nut. There is no direct correlation between test results and severity of an allergy or allergic reaction.

Some children may test positive but have no history of reaction to that allergen. This is called “sensitisation”. To confirm whether this is a true allergy or sensitisation only we may invite your child for an inpatient oral food challenge to confirm.

How serious is peanut allergy?

Most children have mild reactions. Severe reactions affecting the child’s breathing can occur, particularly in those with asthma which is not well controlled and these patients need immediate medical attention. More severe reactions may also occur if the child has an infection or following intense exercise or in older teenagers after drinking alcohol.

Management of reactions

Please follow your child’s allergy management plan that will be discussed in clinic.

How do you manage a nut allergy?

The best way to manage your child's nut allergy is total avoidance of the nut(s) that they are allergic to. The important things to remember in managing their nut allergy are to:

- Identify and avoid the nuts that cause reactions
- Recognise the symptoms of an allergic reaction
- Know how to treat any allergic reactions

It is important to always carry their allergy medication. These include oral antihistamines, and if prescribed, adrenaline auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen) and Salbutamol (blue) inhaler.

Nut allergy and asthma

It is important to ensure that if a child with a nut allergy is diagnosed with a viral induced wheeze or asthma that they are well controlled as this can be a contributing factor to the severity of the reaction, if they were accidentally exposed to nuts.

It is important to continue to take asthma medication as prescribed by their doctor and attend for regular asthma reviews to ensure they are on the correct treatment.

If they were to develop a wheeze following an allergic reaction, they can take 10 puffs of their Salbutamol (blue) inhaler along with oral antihistamines. If their reaction is severe enough to require their adrenaline auto-injector then this should be given first before 10 puffs their salbutamol inhaler.

Please see their allergy management plan for further information or discuss with a member of the allergy team.

How can risks with nut allergy be reduced?

Food Labels

Always read ingredient lists on foods, even if they have eaten the products before, as recipes are sometimes changed.

Some examples of foods to avoid:

- Unrefined peanut oil, Arachis & Groundnut oils
- Beer nuts & Monkey nuts (peanuts)
- Satay sauce (peanuts)
- Muesli (different nuts)
- Waldorf salad (walnuts)
- Pesto (some contain Cashew nuts or pine nuts)
- Macaroons (almonds)
- Marzipan (almonds)
- Nougat (roasted nuts)
- Halva (nut butter)
- Praline (different nuts)
- Some chocolate confectionary (different nuts)
- Chocolate spread (hazelnuts)

Always read the labels on cakes, biscuits, sweets, cereals, dips and sauces, vegetarian food and desserts.

“May contain traces of nuts/peanuts”

We strongly recommend exercising caution when it comes to such labels. Some foods are more high-risk of cross contamination than other foods for example:

- Nut butters or spreads
- Bags of mixed nuts
- Confectionery such as cakes, chocolates or biscuits
- Ice creams – be aware of nut toppings
- Vegetarian meals or alternatives
- Sauces such as satay sauce or some salad dressing
- Breakfast cereals

Some companies use the label “may contain nuts” on all of their foods, regardless of risk. In these situations, use your judgement to decide on the risk of trial. To reduce risk, do not try these foods when unwell, if they have a high temperature, recently exercised or are tired. These factors can lead to threshold to reacting to be reduced and could lead to a more severe reaction.

Natasha’s law enacted in April 2021-which states any of the 14 allergens listed, even in minute quantity should be highlighted on pre-packaged food.

The Food Industry has been given six months to prepare for this change.

In England the law takes effect from 1st October 2021

Eating out

Restaurants and businesses that sell food are required to provide information about the presence of allergens. Don't be afraid to inform staff of any allergies and ask questions about anything you are unsure or concerned about. It is important that you always speak to the chef who will be cooking their food, if they cannot guarantee that the food will not be contaminated with their allergen then it is advised that they do not eat there.

Be aware that if they can eat a dish in one restaurant, another restaurant may make this dish differently. It is therefore important to check ingredients if you are eating somewhere new. Some types of cuisines carry a higher risk of peanut contamination due to nature of their dishes, these include Indonesian, Chinese, Malaysian, Thai and Indian.

Always carry your own or your child's allergy rescue medication with you whenever you eat out.

Other products to avoid

Some medicines, soaps, cosmetics and personal care products contain nut or peanut oil. Peanut oil can also be called arachis oil or groundnut oil. Some skin oils contain almond oil or Shea which is also an edible nut.

For more information please see the anaphylaxis campaign factsheet 'Cosmetics, personal care products and medicines' (website listed under helpful sites).

Cross contamination

Cross contamination is a risk for people with nut allergy. To reduce the risk:

- Try to make your home a nut-free zone
- Avoid kissing or touching a person who has just eaten nuts.
- Teenagers should take special care when they are with friends who are nut eaters, especially when kissing or sharing bottles.
- Nuts last in the mouth for two hours
- Wipe down surfaces or toys if you think nuts may have been present on them. It may be useful to have cleaning wipes with you when out and about.
- Clean utensils, chopping boards, plates and cutlery in hot soapy water
- The nut allergic person should avoid handling bird feeds.

Is peanut allergy life long?

Many children with peanut or tree nut allergy will not outgrow their allergy. If there has been no reaction for a long time or negative allergy tests then an inpatient food challenge may be suggested.

Is there a cure? There is no cure for peanut or tree nut allergy at present. Some allergy centres offer programs to help children tolerate peanuts, but it is unclear if this can cure the problem.

The 'Nuts and Bolts' of a nut allergy for the young person

- The best way of preventing an allergic reaction is by strict avoidance of the nut you are allergic to.
- **Have your rescue medication with you at all times.**
- If possible, carry identification (ID) with a list of your allergies e.g. Medic-Alert bracelet.
- Build up your own personal range of 'safe foods' and ingredients.
- Tell family and friends about your allergy and ensure that they know what they should do if you have an allergic reaction.
- Read food labels carefully.
- Don't be afraid to ask about ingredients when eating out.
- Be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and know how to treat it.
- Have regular allergy check-ups with your allergy team.
- When travelling abroad get names of the nuts translated into the local language.
- If you are not sure about a food, leave it out!

Helpful sites

Anaphylaxis campaign

1 Alexandra Road
Farnborough
GU14 6BU
Helpline: 01252 542029
info@anaphylaxis.org.uk
www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

Allergy UK

Planwell House
LEFA Business Park
Edginton Way
Sidcup
Kent, DA14 5BH
Helpline: 01322 619898
info@allergyuk.org
www.allergyuk.org

Food Standards Agency

UK Headquarters
Floors 6 & 7
Clive House
70 Petty France
London SW1 9EX
Helpline: 0330 332 7149
helpline@food.gov.uk
www.food.gov.uk

York Offices
Foss House
Kings Pool
1-2 Peasholme Green
York YO1 7PR

Local Contacts

Dr Thomas Verghese
Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Allergist
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Secretary Tel: 01904 721435

Dr Clare Magson
Consultant Paediatrician with an interest in allergy
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Secretary Tel: 01904 721435

Paediatric Allergy Specialist Nurse
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Mob: 07984291824

Paediatric Allergy Support Worker
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Mobile: 07824452313

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Paediatric Allergy Specialist Nurses, Child Assessment Unit, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone: 07984291824 or email PaediatricSpecialistNurses@york.nhs.uk.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供，電
或發電

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Telephone: 01904 725566

Email: access@york.nhs.uk

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