York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Introducing egg at home for children with an egg allergy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

ⓘ For more information, please contact:

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This leaflet is to be given with the Egg ladder - Classification of Egg-Containing Food which, if you do not have, can be obtained from the paediatric allergy team (wheat/gluten free and milk free versions are available).

This is **not** suitable for children with previous severe reactions unless under medical supervision.

Background

Most children with egg allergy grow out of their allergy in early life. This is a guide for parents on introducing egg into the diet at home for children who have previously had a mild allergic reaction to egg. There may be some variations for individual children, which your doctor or nurse will explain. Children who have had more severe symptoms previously may need to have a hospital-based food challenge for their initial introduction of baked egg.

The first stage of introduction is to give a small amount of egg that is **well cooked** and **baked with flour** for example in a fairy (sponge) cake as this is less likely to cause allergic reactions than larger amounts of egg or egg that is less cooked or raw. Egg introduction is best done by following an introduction ladder, starting with a small amount of egg protein baked with flour, then larger amounts of well-cooked egg with or without flour.

What if my child has a reaction?

It is important to know what an allergic reaction may look like:

Mild/Moderate Reaction
Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
Swelling of the lips, face, or eyes
Itchy/red skin
Hives (raised itchy rash)
Vomiting / tummy pain

Treatment
Give oral antihistamines and monitor symptoms

Severe Reaction
Swollen tongue
Difficulty swallowing
Hoarse voice
Wheezy breathing/tight chest or coughing
Pale / floppy
Decreased level of consciousness / collapse

Treatment
Use adrenaline pen if you have one, or call 999 immediately stating “anaphylaxis”

If any reactions are observed, stop immediately and follow your management plan and the advice above. Once your child has recovered, contact the allergy team to update and discuss further.

Introducing baked egg at home using cake – Stage 1 of egg ladder

The aim is to give slow stepped doses of gradually increasing amounts of egg at intervals so that your child can eventually tolerate food containing egg.

When to start the challenge

Ideally start the baked egg challenge in a morning and on a weekday – to ensure you can contact the allergy team that day if you have questions. You should have oral antihistamines available*

Only start the challenge if your child is well and has not required use of their salbutamol inhaler or oral antihistamines in the previous five days.

*Oral antihistamines may be available from your GP or local pharmacy. The pharmacist will be able to advice on the correct dose for your child's age.

Initial introduction of baked egg

You will need to use this recipe for the challenge:

Cupcake recipe (makes 8)

Ingredients

- 1 medium egg
- 4 oz /115g self-raising flour (or alternative)
- 4 oz /115g margarine (or alternative)
- 4 oz /115g caster sugar

(1oz / 25g of flour can be substituted for cocoa if chocolate cake is preferred. If you would like to use less sugar this can be substituted for fruit puree)

Method

- Heat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4).
- Beat together the margarine and caster sugar.
- Then beat in the egg and then the flour.
- Spoon the mixture evenly into eight cupcake cases.
- Bake for 15 minutes.
- Test a cupcake with a fork. There should be no mixture on the prongs if it is cooked properly.
- These cakes can be stored in a cool dry place or
- frozen.

A biscuit recipe using one egg in eight well-cooked biscuits (these can be savoury) is an alternative for children who dislike the texture of cake.

Small shop bought fairy cakes (no icing) could be used as an alternative. Please check for other allergens (such as wheat or cows' milk) that your child may be allergic to.

How to introduce baked egg (Stage 1)

1. Bake a fairy cake containing egg (see recipe).
2. Begin by rubbing a small amount of cake on the inner part of your child's lip, wait for 30 minutes. Allow the child to continue normal activities. Observe your child for local redness, itch or swelling. If there have been no symptoms, give your child a pea size amount of cake to eat.
3. Observe your child for the rest of the day. Observe for local redness, itch, swelling, hives (nettle sting type rash), tummy pain, vomiting or wheezing. Symptoms usually occur up to two hours after the last dose (worsening of eczema or gastrointestinal upset may occur after some hours or the next day).
4. If your child has no symptoms the following day, gradually increase the amount of cake/biscuit you give them. Increase it every few days or each week: one sixteenth, one eighth, one quarter, one half, and finally a whole fairy cake.
5. Keep giving a whole fairy cake at least three times a week for at least one month before proceeding to the next stage of the egg ladder.

Further introduction of baked egg – Stage 2 of egg ladder

Once a one egg recipe is tolerated, then you can progress to stage 2. See the egg ladder for ideas or other foods that can be tried (small amounts first) and then freely increase in the diet. Each stage should be tolerated for at least one month before progressing.

The intervals between amounts given can be flexible. It is better to give small amounts frequently to build tolerance and then slowly increase the amount.

If your child develops symptoms continue with a lower amount that was previously tolerated. Stop if symptoms continue and contact the allergy team.

Introducing cooked egg (homemade pancake) – Stage 3 of egg ladder

This homemade pancake introduction can be used once baked egg has been confirmed to be well tolerated and child is regularly eating a selection of foods containing baked egg. You should only progress to this stage if informed to do so by the allergy team.

You will need to use this recipe for the challenge:

Pancake recipe

Ingredients

- 100g plain flour (or suitable alternative)
- 1 large egg
- 300ml semi-skimmed cow's milk (or alternative)
- 1 tablespoon of sunflower oil for frying pan

Method

- Whisk all the ingredients together
- Cook individual pancakes in a frying pan, ensuring they are well cooked on both sides.

Leftover pancakes can be individually wrapped in cling film and frozen for up to a month if required.

How to introduce cooked egg in pancakes

1. Follow the previous advice on when and how to start a challenge.

2. Give your child a pea size amount of pancake to eat. Monitor for any symptoms for the rest of the day.

3. The following day, if there have been no symptoms, give your child twice the amount of pancake to eat.

4. Repeat every few days until a whole pancake is eaten without symptoms.

5. If symptoms or a reaction occurs, then do not give any more pancake, and follow the management plan for a reaction. Continue to give the baked egg products previously tolerated. Consider repeating the challenge in 6 to12 months or as advised by the allergy team.

6. If the pancake has been tolerated, then your child can eat this regularly along with other egg containing foods listed in stage 3 of the egg ladder.

Once tolerated for at least one month your child may now be ready to try foods from stage 4 of egg ladder.

Introducing well-cooked scrambled egg or omelette – Stage 4 of egg ladder

This should be undertaken when your child can already tolerate well cooked egg as an ingredient, such as in homemade pancakes. You should only progress to this stage if informed to do so by the allergy team.

How to introduce cooked egg

Follow the previous advice on when and how to start a challenge.

1. Cook portion of egg, scrambled/omelette; ensuring that other ingredients are tolerated, such as cow's milk. Ensure the egg is well-cooked.

2. Begin by rubbing a small amount of egg on the inner part of your child's lips. Observe for 30 minutes, allow child to continue normal activities, observing for any symptoms.

3. If your child has no symptoms, a few days later, give your child a small bite of cooked egg to eat.

4. Gradually increase the amounts every few days until a portion of cooked egg is finished.

5. If symptoms occur, do not give any more of the egg and follow management plan. Continue to give the egg products that were previously tolerated and consider trying again in six months' time.

6. If a full portion of cooked egg is tolerated, then your child should continue to eat this and other items from stage 4.

Do not worry if your child does not like to eat eggs, this is quite common. There are other items in this stage that can be given as an alternative it they will not eat pure egg.

Once items from stage 4 have been tolerated for at least one month. Items from stage 5, the final stage, can be introduced into their diet in a similar way than before.

This leaflet takes advice from the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) 2021 guideline for the management of egg allergy.

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 , please contact:
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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)

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PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website: www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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