

## What do you need to prepare for a challenge?

We need your child to be completely well for the challenge. If your child has any of the following symptoms in the three days prior to the challenge, please call us to reschedule:

- Fever
- Cough
- Use of Ventolin
- Flare of eczema
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea/abdominal pain
- Nasal congestion
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Current hives (welts)
- Has had anaphylaxis (within the last four weeks)

If your child has any of the above symptoms (even if they are mild), we will most likely cancel the challenge, so please call to reschedule.

### **Please contact the department if your child requires antihistamine in the five days before the challenge.**

Please do not cease asthma preventer medication or hay fever nasal sprays, or eczema creams. Please contact the allergy department on **9345 4333** or **9345 4331** if you have any questions.

Ensure that your child does not have a heavy meal prior to the appointment. If desired they may have a light non-fatty meal. This will ensure that there is no delayed absorption whilst undergoing the challenge.

### **Please allow extra time for parking and admission**

This will assist in ensuring you are on time for your challenge. However, you will be part of a group, and may have to wait before the challenge starts.

## What if you need to reschedule or are running late?

If you cannot attend your appointment or are running late please contact us ASAP on **9345 4333**. If your child fails to attend an appointment and the department has not been contacted on the above number, they will be removed from the waiting list.

If you arrive more than 30 minutes late for your child's challenge, the nurses may send you home. This is to ensure that they are able to observe your child for the appropriate period of time after finishing their challenge.

### **Where is the Allergy Day Medical Unit?**

Reception F, Day Medical Care  
Second level, West Building  
(via the yellow lifts)

### **Remember:**

- **Child must be well on challenge day**
- **No antihistamines for 5 days**
- **Bring the challenge food**
- **Continue asthma preventers and nasal sprays**

### **Allergy and Immunology**

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne  
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TELEPHONE +61 3 9345 4333  
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[www.rch.org.au/allergy](http://www.rch.org.au/allergy)



# Allergy challenge

Information for parents of children with allergies

## What is a challenge?

A challenge is when we give your child a food or medication to determine if they are allergic to it. This is done under close supervision in a safe hospital setting.

### Why do we do this?

Your child may have been allergic to the food in the past and the challenge will tell us whether they have outgrown their allergy. If it is uncertain whether your child is allergic to a food because the history is unclear or if they have never eaten the food in question, the challenge helps to clarify whether your child does have an allergy to the food. For medication challenges, sometimes the medication may not have been the cause of the reaction, and we need to proceed with a challenge to clarify if it is a true allergic reaction.

### Is the challenge safe?

A nurse will observe your child during the challenge, and there is always a doctor or senior nurse present in the clinic. There is a chance that your child might react to the challenge substance, but the staff are specialists in identifying early signs and treating reactions, should they occur.

### How long does the challenge take?

All challenge patients are required to **stay for at least four hours**. We give your child some of the food approx. 15–30 minutes apart. For a medication challenge you are given three doses, 40–60 minutes apart. After the last dose you are asked to stay in the hospital for a further two hours observation. Very occasionally we need to conduct the challenge over two days, but you will go home after each session. You may be required to stay longer if your child has an allergic reaction.

Please note where there is no reaction to the challenge on the day you will be required to continue the food/medication challenge at home for the following week. Instructions and further advice will be provided. Following a successful challenge, it is expected that the food will be incorporated in the diet on a regular basis.

## What do you need to bring for the challenge?

- Your Medicare card and private health fund details.
- All the medications your child has been prescribed, including EpiPen if you have one.
- A snack and a drink for your child.
- A suitable activity for your child, remembering that challenge will take at least four hours.

### Who can you bring to the challenge?

As space in the department is very limited, we can only accommodate **one** parent. Please make separate arrangements for your other children.

### For a medication challenge

The relevant medication, if the doctor has given you a prescription for the medication. If a script has not been provided it will be on the day of challenge.

### For a food challenge

The challenge food and something to mix with it if desired (see the table below).

All food must be transported in an **insulated bag with icepacks**. **Home prepared foods must be stored in an airtight sealed container with a lid**. **All packaged shop-bought food must be sealed in original packaging with current use by date**. When you arrive please give all food for your challenge directly to the nurse looking after your child for **immediate refrigeration**

Food type	What to bring	Suggested foods to assist your child to eat a challenged food
Cow milk	RCH provides cow milk	Current milk formula, breakfast cereals
Baked milk	RCH provides muffin (child <b>MUST</b> be able to tolerate baked egg)	Tomato or spaghetti sauce
Peanuts	<i>Bega</i> smooth peanut butter <b>NOT light</b>	Bread, biscuits, tomato or spaghetti sauce, meat pies
Egg	2 raw whole eggs. (in original carton with expiry date and each egg must have identification stamp). Eggs must not be damaged or cracked.	Spaghetti sauce, pureed fruit or yoghurt
Baked egg	RCH provides baked egg muffin	Jam, yoghurt, fruit
Wheat/risoni	50 grams raw risoni, cooked plain without sauce	Tomato or spaghetti sauce
Soy	Soy milk <b>NOT light</b> (soy baby formula if under 12 mths, <i>So-Good</i> , etc) around 200mls	Current milk formula, breakfast cereals
Meat/fish	One child's serve, cooked (around 250 grams)	Pureed or mashed vegetables, tomato sauce
Nuts	50–100 grams of the ground nut that is being challenged	Pureed fruit, yoghurt, spaghetti sauce, meat pies with tomato sauce, honey or jam
Sesame seed	Tahini paste	Bread, biscuits, tomato or spaghetti sauce, meat pies
Other	One full serve of the food that caused the reaction (approximately 250 grams)	Any food which is tolerated that your child enjoys