



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

*Affix patient label*

# Oral Food Challenge (OFC) for children and young people

## Kempton Day Bed Unit

You have been asked to come to Kempton Day Bed Unit for you or your child to have an Oral Food Challenge (OFC). This leaflet explains what you need to know and hopefully will answer all your questions. If you do have any other questions please ask the nurse or doctor on the day of the OFC.

*Note to young people reading this leaflet: To make this leaflet easier to read we have addressed it to parents or carers; please excuse us for referring to you as 'your child'!*

## What does an OFC involve and why is it necessary?

Following your appointment in allergy clinic the doctor or nurse will decide using information such as skin prick testing or blood testing whether your child has grown out of their food allergy. The only way to truly know if the allergy is no longer there is to perform an oral food challenge (OFC).

The OFC involves your child eating increasing amounts of the food type being challenged every 10-15 minutes (we call these *doses*). These are measured out and given by the nurse looking after your child. Sometimes, for younger patients we ask the parent to give the child these at regular intervals and to record the time and any reactions observed.

**Please inform us of any reactions immediately. Please do not give your child any medication on the ward without first discussing with your nurse or doctor.**

## Are there any risks?

Your child may experience a mild allergic reaction such as an itch or rash, abdominal pain or vomiting. There is a slight risk of a more severe reaction or anaphylaxis. This is why we choose to perform OFC in hospital where trained staff will help in the management of any allergic reaction.

## Do I need to do anything before?

- Small breakfast before admission.
- No oral steroids during the previous two weeks prior to admission.
- No antihistamines must be taken for four days prior to admission.
- If your child is unwell with fever, chesty cold or needs inhalers more frequently please phone Kempton to discuss.

## Do I need to bring anything in?

All the medicines that your child takes, including any that are not taken daily, such as inhalers and rescue medicines (cetirizine and auto adrenaline injectors). Sometimes, a variety of foods or sauces may be required to encourage your child to eat the foods; this will be discussed at your allergy clinic appointment. You will need to follow a recipe and bake either cakes for a well cooked egg challenge or muffins for a baked milk challenge. Please do not make these with other allergens eg flour if your child is allergic to wheat, but use an alternative. Please bring in snacks/lunch especially if your child has other allergies.

## What happens on arrival?

The nurse looking after your child will ask you questions about recent health, rashes, eczema, medicines taken and record these. Pulse, temperature and other observations will also be measured. Sometimes, if necessary, one of the allergy doctors will speak to you and may examine your child.

## When can we go home?

The whole process takes 4-5 hours. Your child will need to stay for two hours after all the doses have been taken and have eaten a snack and showed no signs of reactions before going home. Your child will need to stay on the day bed unit throughout the whole process. On discharge you will be given an electronic discharge letter (EDL) and a copy will be sent to your GP. The doctor or allergy nurse will discuss any follow up necessary.

## If your child passes the food challenge:

An advice leaflet will be given to you explaining how often your child needs to eat the type of food they were previously allergic to. The allergy nurse will phone your child's parent/carer in 4-7 weeks after discharge.

## If your child fails or reacts to the food:

You will need to continue to avoid this food in the diet. You will be given medical advice before being discharged about how to look after your child after their allergic reaction. The doctor or nurse will discuss with you about further allergy appointments.

## Consent

I have read and understood this leaflet and agree to bring my child in for the food challenge (OFC) and if they 'pass' to introduce this food into their diet as the advice leaflet states.

Parent/Carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Contact us

Please phone Sue (Clinical Nurse Specialist) 07788 153 663

Working hours: Mon 8am-1pm, Tue & Wed 8am-4pm

Kempton Day Bed Unit: 0118 322 7512 / 0118 322 8754

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Visit our website [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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