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Food Challenge Patient Information Handout

A food challenge is a test that has been ordered by your doctor to determine whether or not you are allergic to a specific food. In certain cases, skin testing and/or blood tests do not provide enough information to be sure about an allergy to a specific food. In these cases a food challenge is needed to determine whether an allergy exists or not.

What to expect: During a food challenge you (or your child) will be asked to ingest the food you are suspected of being allergic to. Initially, you may be given very small quantities of the food to eat. Gradually, the “dose” of food will be increased and we will monitor for any signs that suggest an allergic reaction. Expect to be in the office for several hours. If an allergic reaction occurs, the appropriate treatment will be provided and the challenge will be discontinued.

What to bring: The most important thing to bring with you to the food challenge is the food which you will be eating during the challenge. Be sure to discuss this with the provider/doctor who ordered the challenge. You may also want to bring in something to read or play with as there will be plenty of “down-time” between doses.

Other instructions and information:

- Discontinue any antihistamine medications at least 7 days before the challenge. Examples of antihistamines include Claritin (loratadine), Zyrtec, Allegra, Benadryl, Xyzal, Clarinex and hydroxyzine. Many over the counter medications contain antihistamines in them. If you have a question about whether to stop a medication or not, contact our office to discuss.
- If available, bring any records of testing done outside our office.
- If the food you are suspected of being allergic to has caused anaphylaxis in the past and you have an EpiPen (or similar epinephrine device) prescribed by your doctor, be sure that it is up to date and that you have it with you when you leave the doctor’s office after the challenge.
- Please do not bring other children with you to the challenge as space in the challenge room is limited

If you have any other questions regarding food challenge testing be sure to ask your doctor or one of our nurses.

Patient name: _____

Date and time of appointment: _____