

Jenny Lind Children's Department **The Paediatric Allergy Clinic**

Information about your clinic appointment

An allergy is a reaction the body has to a particular food or substance. Some mild allergies can be managed by the GP but if it is unclear what your child may be reacting to, your GP may refer your child to an allergy specialist for testing and advice.

The Jenny Lind Children's department offers a "one-stop" allergy clinic so that you will leave your appointment fully aware of any allergies your child may have and how to manage them. Your child will see a variety of specialists including doctors, nurses and dietitians. This may take some time so please be prepared to be at the clinic for at least 1 hour.

The clinic is based at the Chet Valley Medical Practice in Loddon, Norfolk.

George House
40-48 George Lane
Norwich
Norfolk
NR14 6QH

This is a large modern health centre with good parking facilities; however, please bring drinks and snacks with you. There is also a bus service from Norwich City Centre to Loddon (X2 Norwich to Lowestoft service which stops at Loddon).

Preparing for your child's appointment

Before your appointment

- Please think about any allergy-related issues for your child that you want to talk about.
- It may be helpful to write a timeline of events describing any possible allergic reactions to assist you in discussing them during your appointment.
- It can be useful to have details of the ingredients or the name of the specific make of product that was given before any possible reactions occurred.

Please bring to your appointment

- Photos of the allergic reactions that your child has experienced.
- A list of questions for staff.
- A list of all the medicines that your child currently takes.
- Any inhalers, spacer device, antihistamine and adrenaline autoinjector that your child uses.
- Snacks and activities to keep your child happy.
- Your child's red book (personal child health record).
- You could bring a small amount of the substance you suspect your child may be allergic to, if known (please see below under 'Skin Prick Test').

Antihistamines

If your child is taking antihistamines (for example: Piriton™, Zirtek™, Clarityn™, Cetirizine) these should be **stopped three days before** they attend as they will interfere with the skin-prick test. If you are concerned about this, please call the clinic on the telephone number at the end of this leaflet.

Your child does not need to stop any other medication such as asthma inhalers or nasal sprays.

What to expect at your appointment

Arriving at your appointment

- Please report to reception.
- Your child may have their height and weight measured by the nurse. If your child is under 2 years old, they will need to have their clothes removed to be weighed. If they are older than 2 years, they need only remove their shoes. The weight can be recorded in your child's red book (personal child health record).
- Your child is welcome to use the play area but please do not let them eat in this area. We would respectfully ask that you supervise your child at all times.

During the appointment

We often have medical, nursing and other healthcare students observing clinics. If you would prefer a student was not present in the consultation then please let one of the team know.

A detailed history of your child's allergy symptoms will be taken and they may have some skin prick testing undertaken (see below). This will be discussed with you first.

We may give you advice on:

- What to do if your child has an allergic reaction, including the correct use of antihistamines and adrenaline autoinjectors.
- Managing allergic conditions, showing or checking correct use of inhalers and nasal sprays.
- Managing your child's eczema.

The dietitian can also advise you on avoiding foods that your child is allergic to, suggesting suitable alternatives to help ensure that your child is having a balanced diet within the limitations of their allergy.

Allergy Tests

There are two types of allergy tests: skin prick tests (SPT) and specific IgE blood tests. Your consultant will discuss with you which tests are most appropriate.

Skin Prick Test (SPT)

This is the most common test that we do in our clinic. It helps to tell us whether your child is at risk of an allergy to the allergen being tested. An allergen is the name given to a substance causing an allergy and may be, for example, a food or pollen.

Skin tests are performed by the nurse specialist and need expert interpretation to be useful. The diagnosis of an allergy requires a careful consideration of your child's symptoms as well as any test results.

We have skin prick test solutions available in the clinic for allergens such as nuts, egg, milk, fish (including shellfish), pollens and moulds, animals, latex and house dust mites. However, if you are suspicious of certain fruits or vegetables causing a problem, please bring a small amount of the particular fruit/vegetable with you to clinic and we may be able to test with it.

It is important that antihistamines are stopped before the consultation, as they may interfere with the results of the skin prick tests.

- The nurse specialist will mark the allergens to be tested on your child's forearm.
 - A small drop of each allergen solution is dropped onto the skin.
 - A small metal lancet introduces the allergen to the skin. This is not like an injection or a blood test – the skin will not bleed. It feels a bit like being pressed lightly with a ballpoint pen: your child will feel it, but it is not painful.
 - When the test has been completed, the solutions are wiped from the skin.
- After 10 minutes a small itchy bump (wheal) may appear where the SPT was performed. This is measured and may help to diagnose an allergy.
 - The size of the wheal does not indicate the severity of symptoms. The test tells us which allergens may be causing your child's symptoms.
 - The skin may become itchy and red where the SPT was performed.
 - It's important not to scratch as it can make the itching worse and also makes it difficult to measure the wheal.
- Younger children may find the skin allergy tests upsetting but distracting your child during the test can be really helpful, using a favourite toy or hand-held game.

Blood test (Specific IgE)

These are used if more detailed information on the potential allergen is required, or if there is no test solution available.

Unfortunately, we are unable to perform blood tests at this clinic, but we will discuss this with you if required. The results may take between 2 and 6 weeks to get back. We will contact you by phone or letter to make further plans based on the results.

After your appointment

At the end of the appointment, we aim to give you a plan for your child's ongoing care, including results of skin prick tests.

The plan may include a food challenge, change in treatment, or to continue avoiding food. This will be recorded in a letter which will be sent to you and your child's GP. Please let us know if there is anyone in particular who should know the outcome of the clinic appointment.

Follow Up

If your child is diagnosed with a food or other serious allergy, they will be looked after throughout their childhood. The doctor will discuss this with you at the end of your appointment.

Help us to improve our service

Our aim is to improve your child's and your family's experience of living with allergies, while also understanding how we may better prevent and treat allergic conditions.

It is possible that you will be asked to contribute to questionnaires while attending our appointments to help us improve the experience we offer to families.

Research

You may be offered information about participating in research studies. You do not have to take part in any study, but if you find out about one you are interested in, please ask one of the team at your child's appointment for more information.

We are very much looking forward to meeting you.

Contact details

Paediatric Allergy Nurse Specialist via Allergy team secretary 01603 286286 ext 5936 (answerphone available). We aim to get back to you with 2 working days.

Useful websites
www.allergyuk.org

