

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net. This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202601-05-FCIP
Created: January 2018 / Revised: January 2026 / Review
Date: January 2028

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS



Food challenge information

Following skin prick testing, your child may be invited to come in for a food challenge. They will be tested in a safe environment to see if they are still reacting to a certain food.

A food challenge is a procedure where we give your child gradually increasing quantities of food (the food your child has reacted to earlier and has been tested for by an allergy specialist) in specified amounts whilst checking regularly whether an allergic reaction is occurring. Your child will be observed by a trained nurse regularly throughout the challenge and if a reaction occurs, we will be prepared to deal with it immediately.

What can you do before you come into hospital?

Any food being tested is made specifically for your child to ensure it only contains foods that are safe alongside the food being challenged. This is a time-consuming process; if you don't want to go ahead with your appointment, do let us know so we can give it to someone else as there are always a lot of children waiting.

When you receive your appointment letter, please contact the waiting list office on 01623 622515, extension 4304 to inform them of one of the following:

- a) That you are able to attend for the test on the date offered.
- b) You cannot attend but would like a different date.
- c) You no longer want your child to have the challenge.

Do not give antihistamines or cough mixture in the four days before your appointment. However, please use it if its urgently needed but inform us to reschedule the appointment.

Your child will be looked after by an experienced nurse who will keep your child safe. If your child is anxious, please ensure that they understand they are in a very safe place and will be well cared for.

When you come in for the food challenge:

1. Your child can have breakfast as normal.
2. Bring the child's packed lunch - only foods that you know are safe.
3. Bring your lunch. Do not bring food which contains the food your child is being tested for and is allergic to.
4. Bring something to flavour the food your child is being tested for, **but** only something that your child has on a regular basis, for example sauce or crisps.
5. Bring in your child's medication.

What happens when you come to hospital

You need to come to **ward 25** at about 8.45am and should be able to leave between 2pm and 3pm.

1. The doctor will complete admission documentation. This includes prescribing medication in case your child has a reaction so that we can fetch it quickly if necessary. A parent or guardian who has full legal responsibility for your child will need to sign a consent form - this can be arranged on a different day if your child is being taken by a grandparent or someone else. When all this paperwork is complete, we will be able to start the food challenge.
2. Every 15 minutes we will check your child's observations and look out for allergic reactions. We will ask you to tell us if you notice anything about your child that could be an allergic reaction.
3. After observations are complete, we will give your child increasing quantities of the food they are being tested for. This process usually takes about two hours, after which your child needs to remain on the ward for further observation to ensure that a delayed reaction does not occur.
4. Once the observation period has completed, we will inform you whether or not your child is still reacting to the food and what you need to do next.

When you go home

You will be given an advice sheet after the challenge.

Your child must not be involved in any sport or physical activity for 48 hours after the challenge because of the possibility of provoking a delayed reaction.

If your child does have a delayed reaction, please do the following immediately:

- For a mild reaction give a dose of antihistamine and contact the doctor's secretary on 01623 622515 on extension 4399 or extension 3760 for further advice.
- For a severe allergic reaction call 999 and /or use the adrenaline auto-injector if your child has one prescribed earlier.