



Preparing for the Food Challenge

- A food challenge typically takes four to six hours. Be prepared to stay at our Centre for half a day or a full day.
- Eat only well-tolerated foods 48 hours before the food challenge.
- For adults, avoid eating within two hours of the food challenge.
- For children, consumption of well-tolerated foods is allowed during the food challenge.
- Communicate with our staff first if you want to bring any foods to the food challenge.
- Do not take antihistamine three days before the food challenge.
- Continue to take other medications unless advised by your allergist.
- Please contact our team for further advice as needed.

It is completely natural to feel anxious about undergoing an oral food challenge. Our medical staff is here to support you every step of the way and address your concerns. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

HKSH Lee Tak Hong Allergy Centre

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Service Hours

Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri: 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Wed: Closed all day

Sat: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

(except in the second and fourth week of each month, the Centre will open all day Saturdays)

Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays

Consultation by Appointment

For enquiries and appointments,
please contact us



Do You Need a Food Challenge?



養和李德康過敏病科中心

HKSH Lee Tak Hong Allergy Centre

www.hksh.com

What is an Oral Food Challenge?

An oral food challenge, sometimes called food challenge, is a diagnostic test for food allergies. It involves eating a small amount of the suspected food in gradually increased doses over time. The food challenge needs to be done under close medical supervision to ensure maximum safety.

When Do You Need a Food Challenge?

While a food challenge is mainly used to confirm a food allergy, it is also a helpful tool to help you or your child to find out the exact tolerance level for a food allergen. In turns, you or your child will be able to effectively manage your food allergy without unnecessary dietary restrictions.

A food challenge is usually prescribed in one of the following situations:

- **To confirm or rule out whether you have a food allergy** – When the results of your food history, skin prick and blood tests do not provide a clear picture, you may need a food challenge.
- **To enable safe consumption of a tolerated form of the allergen** – You may have different tolerance for different food forms, i.e. raw versus cooked. For example, the majority of egg- or milk-allergic patients can tolerate some amounts of baked egg or milk in muffins, and a muffin or cake challenge can help confirm safe consumption of baked products.
- **To enable safe consumption of a tolerated amount of the allergen** – A food challenge can help you determine your actual tolerance toward the allergic food. When you or your child can tolerate a small amount of the allergen, our team may medically guide you to safely consume the tolerated amount and help you outgrow the food allergy.
- **To determine the starting dose of oral immunotherapy** – With a food challenge, an essential step for food oral immunotherapy, the food can be added back into your diet safely.



How is the Food Challenge Performed?

- Your allergist will first assess you or your child and discuss the food challenge.
- The related food items will be prepared and measured by our dietitians.
- During the food challenge, you or your child will be given the challenge food in increasing doses according to the individual protocol.
- For each assigned dose, you or your child will be observed for 15 to 30 minutes.
- Vital signs, symptoms and any allergic reaction will be recorded after each dose. If there is no reaction, the next dose will be given until the last dose is completed.
- The food challenge will either be stopped when you or your child finishes an age-appropriate portion of the food or when there are objective symptoms such as hives or vomiting.



What Will Happen after the Food Challenge?

In all cases, you will be asked to continue to monitor any allergic symptoms for at least another 48 hours for any delayed reactions. Follow-up appointments will be arranged at our Centre as needed.

If there is an allergic reaction during the food challenge, it means that you or your child is still allergic to the challenge food. Your allergist and dietitian will give you medical advice on managing this food allergy via avoidance, guided eating or immunotherapy, depending on your or your child's tolerance level.

If all doses of the challenge foods are tolerated without any allergic reaction, you or your child will be advised to include the food allergens into the diet after 24 hours on a regular basis.

