



# Food challenge

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## **Why is your child having a provocation test?**

Your child has had an allergic reaction in the past, which may have been caused by food. A blood or skin allergy test can indicate whether your child has a food intolerance. This does not always mean that your child will have an allergic reaction after eating this food. There is no simple test that indicates which foods cause an allergic reaction.

The only way to find out if your child is allergic, and to what extent, is to conduct a food challenge.

## **Risks**

A food challenge studies a person's reaction to eating a specific food. The test is the only way to determine the relationship between the symptoms and the product. During the challenge, your child is offered incrementally increasing concentrations of the food in question to reduce the risk of a major allergic reaction. However, because there is still a chance that your child will have a reaction, the challenge is carried out at the hospital. During the test, the paediatric nurse and paediatric allergist will be with your child.

## **Benefits of the test**

You may be omitting certain foods from your child's diet unnecessarily. The food challenge makes it clear whether specific foods are the cause of your child's symptoms/allergic reactions, allowing your child to enjoy as healthy and complete a diet as possible. You will also learn about how and to what extent the allergic reaction manifests itself in your child (the amount of food, the onset time and the associated symptoms), as well as how to respond to an allergic reaction.

## Preparation

- Your child must stop taking allergy medication (both tablet and liquid) **at least 3 days** before the provocation test. If your child does not stop taking the antihistamines in time, the medicine may affect the results of the test.
- Your child may continue to use his or her medication for eczema or asthma (such as ointments and inhalers).

### Examples of antihistamines (allergy medication) include:

- Clemastine (Tavegil)
- Desloratadine (Aerius)
- Dimetindene (Fenistil)
- Ebastine (Kestine)
- Fexofenadine (Telfast)
- Hydroxyzine (Atarax/ Navicalm)
- Fexofenadine (Telfast)
- Hydroxyzine (Atarax/ Navicalm)
- Loratadine (Claritine/ Allerfree)
- Promethazine (Phenergan)

## Appointment/place

Your child's appointment is at the Children's Department at the Haarlem Zuid location. To ensure peace and safety in the ward, only one parent may accompany the child during the challenge. Siblings and other family members are not allowed to attend the appointment.

## Cancellation

The test cannot take place if your child:

- is ill (fever, cold, diarrhea) or
- has a serious episode of eczema, hay fever or asthma.

In that case, please contact us via the telephone numbers below to make a new appointment.

## Food challenges

There are two types of food challenges: the double-blind food challenge and the open food challenge.

### 1. Double-blind challenge test

Your child will come to the hospital on two different days for this challenge test. Those involved in the test (child, parent, nurse and doctor) do not know whether your child will be eating the food being tested on day 1 or day 2.

On both days, your child will receive something to eat, such as formula milk, a biscuit, muffin or pancake. Special recipes are used to ensure the product tastes the same on both days, but the food being tested is only in the product on one of those days.

Your child will receive an increasing amount of the food allergen in 8 steps, with a 30-minute break between each step. After the last step, we will observe your child for another hour.

If your child shows any symptoms, the paediatrician will decide whether to continue the test, repeat the same step or give your child medication.

If your child has an allergic reaction, we will stop the test and observe your child for at least 2 hours to make sure that the symptoms decrease/disappear.

The doctor will call you about the results of the test a week after the second day of testing. He or she will then also tell you on which day your child received the food being tested.

## 2. Open challenge test

In some cases, such as if there is no good test material for a double-blind test, we may perform an open challenge test. In an open challenge test, the child, parent, nurse and doctor know that the food to be tested is being eaten during the test.

Your child will only have to come to the hospital once. Other than that, an open challenge test proceeds in the same way as a double-blind challenge.

## The results

The paediatrician will inform you of the test results. A telephone appointment will be made for this.

## Cancelling an appointment or asking questions

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please call one of the numbers below as soon as possible.

If you have any questions after reading this folder, please contact us:

- during office hours - the Paediatrics Clinic +31 23 224 0070
- after hours - the Children's Department +31 23 224 0312

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## Waar zijn we te vinden?

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Boerhaavelaan 22  
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