



Early Introduction of Allergenic Foods

# What are allergenic foods?

Allergenic foods are foods that have a higher risk of allergy. These include the following:

- Egg
- Milk
- Peanut
- Wheat
- Soy
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Sesame
- Tree nuts (e.g., almond, cashew, walnut, hazelnut, macadamia, pine nut)

Studies have shown that the early introduction of allergenic foods followed by regular consumption can help prevent food allergy.

# When is an ideal time to introduce allergenic foods?

Complementary solids can be started between 4 and 6 months of age when your baby is developmentally ready.

Introduce **egg and peanut** to your baby once he/she has started on solids, around the **age of 6 months.** 

Introduction of other allergenic foods should not be deliberately delayed. They should be **introduced alongside** other initial weaning foods (e.g., fruits, vegetables, meats).



## How do I introduce the allergenic foods?

Allergenic foods should be introduced one at a time. Watch for any allergic reaction when introducing a new allergenic food for the first time. The new allergenic food can be given daily for the next two consecutive days to confirm if baby can tolerate the food. Following this, **give the food regularly** to maintain tolerance to the food.

Allergenic foods can be introduced in age-appropriate textures. The food can be made blended or mashed into a carbohydrate base (e.g., porridge or cereal). The following table shows examples of how the allergenic foods can be prepared.

Allergenic Food	Preparation Examples	To Note
Egg	<ul> <li>Hard-boiled egg mashed or blended into porridge or cereal.</li> <li>Egg cracked into porridge and then fully cooked.</li> <li>Fried omelette cut into strips.</li> </ul>	Egg must be fully cooked.     A whole egg can be introduced at once. Alternatively, you can introduce egg yolk before egg white as egg yolk is less likely to trigger an allergic reaction as compared to egg white.
Milk	<ul> <li>Cereals/baby foods that contain milk solids.</li> <li>Sugar-free yogurt/yogurt melts</li> <li>Standard cow's milk formula</li> </ul>	Fresh milk can only be introduced after 1 year of age.
Peanut Tree nuts	Sugar and salt-free peanut butter mixed into cereals or spread on baby bites/biscuits or bread.	<ul> <li>Homemade nut butters can be made by blending plain roasted nuts.</li> <li>Do not offer baby the whole nut as it is a choking hazard.</li> </ul>
Wheat	<ul><li>Cereals made from wheat.</li><li>Wheat containing noodles or pasta.</li><li>Bread</li></ul>	Some cereals and noodles are made from rice and do not contain wheat. Check the ingredient list on the packaging to verify that it contains wheat.
Soy	<ul><li>Mashed tofu</li><li>Soy milk/soy pudding</li></ul>	
Fish Shellfish	Steam or added directly in porridge to cook, then mash or blend.	Ensure fully cooked.

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# How do I know if my baby has a food allergy?

There are two types of allergic reactions – immediate and delayed.

### + Immediate

The mild immediate type is commonly seen and usually occurs **within 2 hours** of ingesting the food. The reactions include development of widespread redness, hives, eye and lip swelling, single episode of vomiting. Mild allergic reactions can be managed by a general practitioner or paediatrician.





Bumpy urticaria on background of flushing signifying mild allergic reaction

- → Severe immediate type allergic reaction, also known as anaphylaxis, involves any one of the following:
  - **Respiratory:** difficulty breathing, noisy breathing, voice hoarseness, tongue swelling, turning blue
  - **Gut:** vomiting more than once, severe abdominal pain
  - Circulation: turning pale, limp, drowsy or losing consciousness



### Call for an ambulance (995) if any of the above occurs.

Minor redness around the mouth that improves spontaneously is most often due to skin irritation and is not an allergic reaction. Try putting some barrier creams (e.g., paraffin or moisturisers) prior to eating to protect the skin against local food irritation.

### + Delayed type allergic reactions are rare.

These typically occur more than 2 hours but within 48 hours of food ingestion. It may include persistent vomiting, diarrhea (watery, stools that can be mucoid or bloody), or a flare of pre-existing eczema.

Consistency is required for the diagnosis – the same reaction will occur with repeated ingestion of the food. See a paediatric allergist who can evaluate your baby further.



# What should I do if I suspect that my baby has a food allergy?

If you suspect that your baby has a food allergy, avoid the food in the meantime and see a paediatric allergist who can evaluate your baby further. Keeping a food diary and pictures of the reaction will be helpful when seeing the doctor.



# Notes

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NUWoC comprises the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (0&G) and Khoo Teck Puat - National University Children's Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI) of National University Hospital. It focuses on the right-siting of appropriate services in the community and builds complementary services in National University Health System's (NUHS) centres of excellence — Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Alexandra Hospital.

Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, KTP-NUCMI established an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services for children. We are also the only public specialist centre in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes.

For more information about us, visit www.nuh.com.sg/NUWoC.

### **Contact Us**

### Children's Emergency (24-hr)

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1

Contact: +65 6772 5000

### KTP-NUCMI

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2 (Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing,

Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)

Operating Hours: 8.30am - 5.30pm (Mon to Fri),

8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)

General Enquiry: +65 6772 5736 Appointment Line: +65 6908 2222 Email: ktpnucmi\_appt@nuhs.edu.sg

### 9a Viva-University Children's Cancer Centre

Location: NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9 Operating Hours: 8am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)

Appointment Line: +65 6772 5030

Fax: +65 6872 4314

Email: cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg

### NUH Children's Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location: Junction 10, 1 Woodlands Road,

#01-22, Singapore 677899

Operating Hours: 9am - 11pm daily

(including public holidays) General Enquiry: +65 6219 1538 Email: childrenucc@nuhs.edu.sg

Website: www.nuh.com.sg/ucc

### NUH Child Development Unit @ JMC

Location: Jurong Medical Centre, 60 Jurong West

Central 3, Level 2, Singapore 648346

Operating Hours: 8.30am - 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)

Appointment Line: +65 6665 2530/2531

Fax: +65 6665 0158 Email: cdu@nuhs.edu.sg Website: www.nuh.com.sg/cdu

### NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

Location: Keat Hong Community Club,

2 Choa Chu Kang Loop, #03-01, Singapore 689687 Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)

Appointment Line: +65 6769 4537/4637

Fax: +65 6665 0158 Email: cdu@nuhs.edu.sg Website: www.nuh.com.sg/cdu

### NUWoC Children's Clinic @ NTFGH

Location: Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Tower A – Specialist Outpatient Clinics, Level 2

Operating Hours: 8.30am - 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)

Appointment Line: +65 6908 2222

Fax: +65 6716 2200

Email: appointment@nuhs.edu.sq



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