

Food Challenge

What is a food challenge?

An oral food challenge happens when patients are given a small quantity of a certain food to determine whether they might be allergic to that food.

Why do we perform food challenges?

We perform oral food challenges because it is important to diagnose or rule out potential food allergies. This way, individuals can determine which food(s) to avoid, and which ones are safe to eat.

Who should not have an oral food challenge?

- Those with poorly controlled asthma or who have experienced a recent asthma flare
- Those with a recent or concurrent illness

Information regarding your food challenge appointment:

- Your appointment will take approximately four hours
- You will **not** be able to leave the clinic for any reason (including to buy coffee or lunch)
- Make sure to bring what you need for the duration of the four hours including a book to read or something to keep you occupied
- If you have any kind of reaction during the challenge, you may not feel well enough to drive home. Plan to have a driver available and not to travel for a period of time after the food challenge.
- You are required to bring the food you are challenging with you to your appointment. Foods are not supplied in the clinic. If you do not bring the required food, we will be unable to conduct your food challenge

What to expect after your food challenge?

- Avoid vigorous exercise for two hours after your challenge, such as jogging, brisk walking and gym workouts.
- Although you may not have experienced any food reaction while in the clinic, it is possible to experience a reaction later in the day or evening.
- Rarely, a serious systemic reaction can develop after your challenge. Symptoms may include:
 - Swelling in the throat
 - Wheezing
 - A feeling of tightness in the chest

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- Nausea
- Dizziness

What to do if you have a reaction:

- In the event of a **severe reaction**, go to your nearest Emergency Department for treatment. **Do not wait to contact the clinic.**
- For questions related to your food challenge, or advice about minor reactions, you can contact St. Joseph's Allergy Clinic during regular office hours: at 519-646-6100 ext. 61353. Please note: **This is not a substitute for Emergency care.**

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