

Department of Allergy

Introduction

We are a major allergy centre delivering comprehensive specialist allergy services for adults and children. Allergy is a medical speciality which treats people developing allergic symptoms or reactions. This can be due to food allergy, drug allergy, insect sting allergy or allergies in the environment for example those causing hay fever, asthma or eczema. We also investigate and manage severe allergies such as anaphylaxis which can be life-threatening. Some conditions which mimic allergy are not caused by allergy (e.g. hives, swellings and rhinitis) and these are also dealt with by allergy services. Allergy services deliver desensitisation treatment for some allergies and some monoclonal antibody therapies. Drug allergies investigated include antibiotics, pain killers, drugs used in general anaesthetics, local anaesthetics, and contrast media, but increasingly many others.

For adults and children we make a diagnosis based a detailed clinical history, supplemented where necessary by skin tests (prick and intradermal tests), blood tests and occasionally challenges (administration of a drug or ingestion of a food under supervision in clinic). Paediatric services provide access to specialist allergy dietetic services. We aim to address your allergy concerns in one, or perhaps two face to face clinic visits. You will likely then be discharged back to your GP's care, and further follow up is arranged by your GP as indicated by us.

Guidance for Patients

If you have been referred to the allergy service then while waiting for an appointment you may experience further allergic reactions. These should be reported to your GP or other referring doctor who can provide advice and treatment. If your allergic reaction is severe you may need to call an ambulance, dial 111 or attend the Emergency Department. If you have had a severe reaction you should discuss with your GP whether you should carry injectable adrenaline (e.g. a Jext or Epipen). This can be arranged by your GP before your appointment with us. If you have been given an adrenaline auto injector then you should ask the prescribing doctor for training in its use.

If you do experience an allergic reaction, you should keep a record of the reaction(s) with dates/times; symptoms; treatment needed; and possible triggers e.g. your environment, food eaten, medicines, alcohol and whether you were exercising. Photographs of rashes and swelling will help us to make an earlier diagnosis and you should ask your GP to attach the photographs to the referral and bring these with you so that we can view and attach to your confidential medical records. If you have developed an allergic reaction to a specific food e.g. a fruit, vegetable or shellfish, kindly ensure that you bring a small fresh sample of these with you to the allergy clinic appointment (we have our own samples for most other foods, pollens and pets).

Please STOP taking all antihistamines for 3-5 days before your allergy clinic appointment:

IF this is your first appointment

OR you were informed at a previous appointment that you will have skin testing undertaken. Most patients having 2nd appointments will not need further skin testing.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your allergies become worse or you have further frequent allergic reactions then contact your GP who can provide advice and treatment. Your GP can also seek advice and guidance from the specialist allergy service. If you have a severe allergic reaction then you should call 999 and attend the emergency department.

Contact Us

We are not able to provide advice if you are a patient still waiting for your first outpatient appointment or if you have been discharged from the Allergy Service. In this instance please contact your GP.

If you are already under our care, you will be provided with a copy of the letter sent to your GP and this should provide comprehensive information about your treatment. If you have a query about the information provided then our team contact details are below, and we will respond as soon as possible.

Secretarial team:

Email - add-tr.allergy.secretaries@nhs.net

Telephone - 01223 217 777

Admissions co-ordinator – 01223 586976