

## How should you manage a reaction?

Children and parents will be given a written management plan in clinic and prescribed appropriate medication which should be always available.

If sesame seeds are accidentally eaten, the food should be spat out straight away and an antihistamine taken as soon as possible.

Severe symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing (wheezing, noisy breathing, blue colour)
- Swelling in the throat (noisy breathing, drooling)
- Feeling faint or dizzy, looking very pale (lie the child down with their legs raised).

**If any of these severe symptoms occur get help straight away and dial 999 stating “anaphylaxis” (ana-fil-ak-sis).**

## Who needs to know about this allergy?

It is important to inform the nursery/school and any after school clubs. Any other carers such as grandparents, relatives and school friends’ parents will also need to know.

## Is sesame seed allergy life long?

Most children with sesame seed allergy (over 80%) will not outgrow their allergy. If there has been no reaction for a long time an oral food challenge may be suggested by your doctor.

## Is there a cure?

There is no cure for sesame seed allergy, but research is underway which may lead to the development of new treatments.

## How can I contact you if I need to?

### References

Oriel RC, et al. Comprehensive diagnosis, management, and treatment of sesame allergy. J Allergy Clin Immunol Pract, 2024  
Chua GT, et al. Real-world safety and effectiveness analysis of low-dose preschool sesame oral immunotherapy. J Allergy Clin Immunol Glob, 2023  
Saf S, et al. Sesame allergy in children: New insights into diagnosis and management. Pediatr Allergy Immunol, 2023.

Created October 2012, Reviewed Jan 2024, Next review date Jan 2027.  
Information should be used in conjunction with advice from a medical professional.  
Sesame seed allergy Guidelines - North West Paediatric Allergy Implementation Group



# Sesame seed allergy Information Leaflet

[www.allergynorthwest.nhs.uk](http://www.allergynorthwest.nhs.uk)



## What is sesame seed allergy?

An allergy to sesame protein after eating the seed. It has become more common over the past ten years and is estimated to affect 1 in 100 people. One in three children with multiple food allergies may have sesame allergies.

## What are the symptoms of sesame seed allergy?

Symptoms usually occur straight after eating the food but can occur up to one hour later. The reaction tends to be mild and may include a rash (hives or “nettle” rash) or swelling, especially around the face. Some children have an itchy throat; others may vomit or have diarrhoea. Severe reactions (anaphylaxis) are less common and include difficulty breathing (with wheeze or swelling in the throat), feeling faint or dizzy.

Children may tolerate sesame seeds in bakery products but are allergic to crushed sesame seeds in hummus. Unlike other oils, sesame oil is made by cold-pressing sesame seeds and is not refined, so may cause allergies.

People can also develop delayed skin reactions to using creams and toiletries containing sesame seed oil, or *Sesamum indicum* in Latin.

## How serious is sesame seed allergy?

Most people with sesame seed allergy will only have mild reactions. Severe reactions affecting the child’s breathing occur, particularly in those with poorly controlled asthma. More severe reactions may also occur if the child has a cold, following intense exercise, at times of stress or in teenagers after drinking alcohol. Severe reactions need urgent medical attention.

## Are there likely to be any other food allergies?

Children with sesame allergy may also be allergic to other seeds, peanuts and tree nuts. Seek medical advice before excluding other foods as this may not be necessary.

## How do we diagnose sesame seed allergy?

The diagnosis is based on a history of a typical reaction after contact with sesame containing products. Positive allergy tests skin prick or blood IgE tests support the diagnosis, but should not be used alone, as people can have positive allergy tests but tolerate the food without getting a reaction.

Skin prick tests are safe and can be done in clinic provided that the child has not had any antihistamines for a few days. Blood tests are not affected by antihistamines, but the results are only available a week or so after the clinic appointment.

If the diagnosis is uncertain an oral sesame challenge is sometimes recommended.

## How can you avoid sesame seeds?

The following foods are made from (bold), or should be checked for sesame:

<b>tahini</b>	<b>halvah</b>	<b>gomashio</b>	hummus	falafel
Bread & buns	crackers	cereal (health) bars	bread sticks	salads

When eating out, check the ingredients. Middle Eastern, Chinese, Thai and Japanese foods can all contain sesame seeds. Sesame seeds can also be called Benne, Gingelly, Ajonjoli, Juljulan, Zelzlane, Sumsum, Simsim in Arabic, Zhī Má, Hú Má in Chinese, Goma, Shima in Japanese and Til in Hindi, Sanskrit Urdu.

### References

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