

How should you manage a reaction?

A written management plan will be given in clinic. Allergy medication should be available at all times.

If tree nuts are accidentally eaten, get the child to spit it out if possible and give an antihistamine.

Severe symptoms are:

- 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 tree nut allergy life long?

Yes, tree nut allergy is life long and hence the avoidance will have to be life long.

Is there a cure?

There is no cure for tree nut allergy at present.

How can I contact you if I need to?

References:

de Weger WW, et al., Safe selection of children with a suspected food allergy to introduce peanut or tree nuts at home. CEA, 2024 Tree Nut Allergy guidelines - North West Paediatric Allergy Implementation Group.
Spolidoro GC, et al. Prevalence of tree nut allergy in Europe. A systematic review and meta-analysis. Allergy, 2024 This information should be used in conjunction with advice from a medical professional.
Labrosse R, et al. Recent advances in the diagnosis and management of tree nut and seed allergy, Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol, 2022.



Tree Nut Allergy Information for parents and carers



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How common is tree nut allergy?

Tree nut allergy is more common in older children and adults than in infants.

What are the symptoms of tree nut allergy?

Symptoms usually start straight after eating the nut. They include a rash (hives or “nettle” rash), swelling of the lips or around the eyes, and itch. Some children have an itchy throat, others feel sick or vomit.

Severe reactions are much less common but may include difficulty breathing (wheeze or throat swelling), feeling faint or dizzy. These are features of anaphylaxis and need urgent medical attention.

Will my child be allergic to nuts other than the one causing the reaction?

Some nuts are from the same family and may also cause reactions (this is known as cross-reactivity). Cross-reacting nuts should be avoided. Examples include:

- cashew and pistachio nuts
- pecan and walnuts.

Children with nut allergy should **never** eat nuts from a mixed nut collection.

It is often easier to avoid all nuts in childhood to avoid confusion for other family members, friends, and school staff. As children grow older and become more independent, they may want to know exactly which nuts they can and cannot eat. This needs to be discussed with your allergist who may repeat allergy tests.

Chestnuts, coconut and seeds like pine nuts, sesame and sunflower seeds can usually be eaten. Your specialist can advise.

How do we diagnose tree nut allergy?

The diagnosis of tree nut allergy is based on the history of a typical reaction after contact. Positive allergy skin prick or blood IgE tests support the diagnosis. Where there is no history of a reaction to the nuts, allergy tests should be interpreted with caution, as children can have a positive allergy test but tolerate the nut without getting a reaction.

Skin prick tests are safe and can be done in clinic if antihistamines have not been taken for a few days. Blood tests are not affected by antihistamines, but the results are only available in a week or so after the clinic appointment.

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

How can my child avoid tree nuts?

Cashews, pistachios, almonds, and hazelnuts can be hidden ingredients in food, particularly in Asian, Chinese, and Thai food. Hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews and almonds can also be found in baked sweets and chocolates. You should read the ingredients list on pre-packaged foods and ask for the chef's reassurance in restaurants. In the UK and EU, if nuts are not listed in the ingredients of pre-packaged foods, they can be eaten.

Unpackaged foods in bakeries and delicatessens sold alongside foods containing nuts may be contaminated with tree nuts and should be avoided. Ringing the food outlet to get information before planning a meal can avoid disappointment.

It is often easier to avoid all nuts, than avoid just some nuts. In children with a reaction to one or two nuts, the option of continuing to consume tree nuts that are known to be tolerated and where the risk of cross-contamination is considered low may be considered.

References:

de Weger WW, et al.,. Safe selection of children with a suspected food allergy to introduce peanut or tree nuts at home. CEA, 2024 Tree Nut Allergy guidelines - North West Paediatric Allergy Implementation Group.
Spolidoro GC, et al. Prevalence of tree nut allergy in Europe. A systematic review and meta-analysis. Allergy, 2024 This information should be used in conjunction with advice from a medical professional.
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