



**West Hertfordshire
Hospitals**
NHS Trust



A guide to...

Introducing ‘safe’ nuts at home

Patient information

Paediatric Department
Watford General Hospital
Hemel Hempstead Hospital










Who is the leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients, parents and carers and gives an explanation of what to do if your doctor has **tested your child for nuts and the tests are negative**. The doctor has advised you to introduce specific nuts into your child's diet. On the basis of testing, this is safe to do at home. Your child may still have allergy to other nuts but it thought safe to start eating those nuts with very low test results – these are known as 'safe nuts'.

IF YOU ARE UNSURE PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE CONTINUING.

Which nuts can my child eat?

The doctor will tick the nuts they are suggesting you can introduce at home in the grid below.

		
Peanut <input type="checkbox"/>	Cashew <input type="checkbox"/>	Almond <input type="checkbox"/>
		
Pistachio <input type="checkbox"/>	Hazelnut <input type="checkbox"/>	Walnut <input type="checkbox"/>
		
Pecan <input type="checkbox"/>	Brazil <input type="checkbox"/>	Macadamia <input type="checkbox"/>
Other nuts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How do I introduce these nuts into my child's diet?

We have devised a "Check 1, 2, 3... GO!" system.

CHECK 1 – YOUR CHILD IS WELL

Is my child well today?

Is my child's eczema, asthma or hay fever well controlled today?

If 'YES' proceed...

CHECK 2 – THE NUT IS SAFE

Buy the nut in its shell or buy a bag of the actual nut you have been told you can introduce and check you cannot see visible contamination.

Introduce only one safe nut at a time in your own home.

Offer the safe nut at a time you are able to watch your child.

If your child is under five years old, grind the nut as it is a choking hazard.

Make sure the safe nut is not offered with any other new foods.

IF 'YES' proceed...

CHECK 3 – YOU HAVE YOUR CHILD'S ALLERGY PLAN

Have you all you need available for the treatment of an unforeseen reaction?

- Your child's Allergy Action Plan
- Adrenaline Pen (Epipen, Jext, Emerade) if prescribed
- Antihistamine medicine (Chlorphenamine or Cetirizine)



**If all the above are in place...
...you can GO!**

IF you have ANY doubt...WAIT and start the CHECK on another day.



How often and how much of the safe nut/s should your child eat?

We suggest you should aim to give your child at least 2 portions of the safe nut a week.


One portion is the amount of nut your child can hold in their hand.

You can use nut butters – the Meridian range are pure nut butters.



<https://www.meridianfoods.co.uk/Products/Speciality-Nut-Butters>

The following table gives a guide to the type and the amount of nut to give:

Type of nut	Ways to give the nut	Amount to give	'Safe' food continuing this nut
Peanut	Grind whole nuts in children under 5 years old	About 20 peanuts at least twice a week	Bamba made by Osem  Net Wt. 3.5oz (100g)
	Peanut butter	About 2 teaspoons at least twice a week	
	Plain, whole peanuts from the shell or a single nut pack	About 20 peanuts at least twice a week	
Tree nuts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashew • Pistachio • Almond • Hazelnut • Walnut • Pecan • Brazil • Macadamia 	Nut butter	About 2 teaspoons at least twice a week	Use Meridien nut butters as above – see below for some ideas.
	Plain nuts from a single nut pack, or from the shell	About 20 nuts at least twice a week	

Ideas for getting the nuts into your child's normal diet

Whole nuts are a choking hazard to babies and children under 5 years of age.

We suggest using smooth nut butters.

You could:

Mix 2 teaspoons of peanut butter in your baby/child's cereal, yoghurt or apple/fruit puree. (you can add 2-3 teaspoons of hot water to soften the peanut butter).

or

Put 2 teaspoons of peanut butter on ½ slice of toast at lunchtime

or

Add 2 teaspoons of peanut butter into spaghetti, sauces or stews

The aim is for 2 teaspoons of peanut butter per day, at least twice a week.

Once peanut butter/peanuts have been introduced, safe nut butters can be introduced in the same way as above.

Being safe outside the home

We suggest being cautious when you are away from the home, for example at nursery, school, grandparents' house, restaurants, parties and religious gatherings.


We advise that your child avoids all nuts in those situations due to the risk of cross contamination or confusion about identifying a type of 'safe' nut.

Only eat the safe nut/s at home

We recommend you are very careful with commercial products that may contain nuts such as cereal bars, biscuits or crackers due to their unknown contaminants.

What about "May contain..." warning labels?

Example label:

Ingredients	
Peanuts (100%)	
	Allergy Advice Contains <u>peanuts</u> . Not suitable for nut and sesame allergy sufferers due to the methods used in the manufacture of the product.

All ingredients are included in the list of ingredients. Any allergen, including nuts, has to be indicated in bold, italic or be underlined. Food manufacturer can decide which on to use.

Advice labels about ingredients on food are known as 'Precautionary Allergen Labelling' (PAL). How a label looks varies between companies. The use of these labels is not obligatory. Warning labels can be difficult to interpret. All foods carry a risk of contamination. 'Snack' foods such as biscuits, cakes and chocolate carry a higher risk than other, non-snack, foods. Avoiding all snack foods lowers the risk of a reaction but restricts the diet. In the UK the risk of contamination with nut in pre-packed food with a warning label is very low.

Even nuts from a pack of single nuts will often be labelled with a warning saying: "May contain traces of nuts" or "Made in a factory that handles nuts" or "Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers". They also suggest there may be contamination with another nut not contained in the single nut packed. If you can clearly see that the packet contains only the whole safe nut, then the chances of cross contamination are minimal.

We suggest the following approach to the risk assessment when looking at labels:

- Check the product each time. Recipes can change and you should be vigilant about ingredients.
- Avoid these products labelled 'may contain' when your child is unwell as this can lower the threshold of a reaction.
- Ensure you have your child's allergy plan and rescue medication with you.
- Make sure you can reach help if needed.

Discuss your approach to managing "may contain nut" products with your dietitian or allergy team as they can give specific advice for your child. Contacting the manufacture can also be helpful in deciding on the risk of contamination.

Restaurants and eating out

Any establishment serving food (non pre-packed foods) must declare which allergens have been deliberately added to food by EU law. Natasha's Law came into effect from October 2021 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and requires food businesses to provide full ingredient lists and allergen labelling on foods packaged for sale on the premises.

You should tell restaurant staff about your allergy every time you eat out. The commonest places where accidents reactions due to exposure to nuts occur are Asian restaurants, ice-cream shops and bakery shops.

Nut oils

Nut oil is highly refined and the amount of nut protein left is very small. It has been shown that peanut allergic patients can tolerate refined peanut oil. However be careful because some unrefined so called 'aromatic' or 'gourmet' cold pressed oils from both peanut and tree nuts may still contain sufficient nut protein to cause an allergic reaction. These products must be avoided. EU labelling mandates that highly refined oils must be labelled with their source nut.

Further information

Information about allergies can be found at:

Allergy UK	allergyuk.org
The Anaphylaxis Campaign	anaphylaxis.co.uk
Food Standards Agency	food.gov.uk

How to contact us:

Paediatric Department
Watford General Hospital
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Vicarage Road
Hertfordshire
WD18 0HB

Tel: 01923 217 248

Email: westherts.paediatrics@nhs.net

References

Dietary advice for 'safe' selective nut eating. Evelina Children's Hospital's Children's Allergy Clinic. Jan 2019.

Stiefel G, Anagnostou K, Boyle RJ, Brathwaite N, Ewan P, Fox AT, Huber P, Luyt D, Till SJ, Venter C, Clark AT. BSACI guideline for the diagnosis and management of peanut and tree nut allergy. *Clinical & Experimental Allergy*. 2017 Jun;47(6):719-39.

Allergy UK
<https://www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms/585-managing-my-food-allergy>

Food Standards Agency
<https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/english/rules-and-legislation/>

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **west.herts.pals@nhs.uk**



Author	Dr Ashley Reece
Department	Paediatrics
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