

Wheat ladder

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

Your child's allergist or dietitian has advised you to introduce wheat into your child's diet. This is not suitable for children with immediate allergy to wheat.

Before trying the home wheat introduction

Make sure that your child is well. This means:

- their eczema, asthma or hay fever is well controlled
- they do **not** have a cough, cold, diarrhoea or vomiting
- if you're excluding other foods from your child's diet continue to do so - only introduce one new food at a time
- continue any regular medications as prescribed
- if your child has been started on a new medication, wait at least two weeks to make sure they tolerate the medicine before introducing wheat
- if your child has been prescribed allergy medications, have them available at home

It is best to start at the weekend when you have time to observe your child.

What if my child develops symptoms?

Immediate reaction:

It is very unlikely that your child will experience immediate wheat allergy symptoms (e.g. hives). If any symptoms occur within two hours of eating wheat:

- stop giving wheat
- follow your child's Action Plan if they have their own

If your child does not have an Action Plan and experiences serious symptoms such as breathing difficulty, dizziness or floppiness call 999.

Delayed reaction:

- this can include worsening of eczema, tummy discomfort, constipation or loose stools (poo)
- it can happen between two hours and up to three days after introducing the new food, or trying a higher step on the ladder

- however, these symptoms can also occur for lots of other reasons: e.g. catching a cold virus or a tummy bug, being stressed/anxious because of exams or not sleeping well. So, if your child develops delayed symptoms and their symptoms are mild, stop giving wheat for three to five days, until they have recovered, and then try the same step again
- if their symptoms are significant, very distressing or have occurred on two attempts at the same step, and there are no other obvious reasons for this, go back and continue at the previously well-tolerated step. You can try the next step again in three months' time. If significant symptoms occurred after step 1, stop and continue avoiding wheat altogether

How to introduce wheat following the wheat ladder

Please follow the advice in this table:

Steps	Take 3-7 days for each step	You can give one of the following foods or choose a different option. Always check the label	If excluding milk, egg, soya or nuts. You can give one of the following foods or choose a different option. Always check the label
Step 1	Give baked food containing wheat once a day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¼ Weetabix™ • 10g cooked pasta • ¼ slice bread or toast • 1 bread stick • ½ cream cracker • ½ Digestive biscuit • 1 Rich Tea biscuit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¼ Weetabix™ • 10g cooked egg free pasta • ¼ slice Soya free bread (e.g. Jackson's, Waitrose love life, Tesco's Finest) • ½ Jacob's Cream Cracker® • 1 Bread stick (e.g. Tesco's) • ½ milk free Digestive biscuit (e.g. Doves Farm, Waitrose, Sainsbury's)
Step 2	Double the portion in step 1	e.g. ½ Weetabix™, 20g cooked pasta, 1 Digestive biscuit, ½ slice bread	e.g. 20g egg free pasta, ½ slice bread
Step 3	Double the portion in step 2	e.g. 1 Weetabix™, 40g cooked pasta, 2 Digestive biscuits, 1 slice bread	e.g. 40g egg free pasta, 1 slice bread
Step 4	Give a normal portion for your child's age once a day	e.g. 2 Weetabix™, 40-60g cooked pasta, 2 slices bread	e.g. 40-60g egg free pasta, 2 slices bread
Step 5	Add an additional portion	Your child will be eating 2 portions of wheat-containing food a day	

If tolerating full portions of wheat for 7 days your child should be able to include wheat freely in their diet.

Contact details

If you have any questions, please contact our paediatric dietitians on 020 3312 1127. Please note that this number is not for urgent healthcare queries. For urgent queries, contact 999 (for emergencies), 111 (for non-emergencies) or your GP as appropriate.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk