

Allergy and Immunology



Children'sSM
Healthcare of Atlanta

Why does my child need an Allergy and Immunology clinic visit?

An allergy is when the body reacts to something normally harmless like food, pollen, dust, mold and pet fur or dander. These are called allergens.

IgE is a protein the body makes when your child comes in contact with an allergen. The protein causes a reaction in your child's body. This is called an IgE mediated allergy.

Food allergy symptoms

- Hives
- Swelling
- Trouble breathing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or fainting

Environmental allergy symptoms

- Wheezing
- Sneezing
- Congestion or runny nose
- Cough
- Itchy eyes

How do I prepare for my child's visit?

Medicines

Your child should stop taking antihistamine medicines **7 days** before their visit. Allergy skin tests will not give correct results if your child takes these medicines:

- Benadryl (Diphenhydramine)
- Zyrtec (Cetirizine)
- Claritin (Loratadine)
- Allegra (Fexofenadine)
- Cough and cold medicines
- Mucinex Allergy

Your child can keep taking:

- Steroid nasal sprays, like Flonase (Fluticasone)
- Asthma inhalers
- Singulair (Montelukast)

Notes

Write down these things and bring them to clinic:

- Your questions and concerns
- Reasons your child is seeing an allergist or immunologist
- If you are worried about a food allergy
- Ingredients of the food that worries you

Test results

- Bring copies of blood and allergy test results.

What happens during the visit?

Health history

The doctor will ask questions about your child's health history. They will focus on concerns you have about:

- Food allergy symptoms
- Environmental allergy symptoms
- Asthma or wheezing
- Eczema or other rashes

Tests

Your child may have tests for allergy triggers if their symptoms are from a type of allergy called "type I" or "IgE-mediated". Allergy testing includes skin pricks and blood tests (labs) for IgE-mediated allergies.

- They tell us:
 - Food allergies
 - Environmental allergies
- They do **not** tell us:
 - The cause of eczema. Allergies are not the cause of eczema, but they are more common in children with eczema.
 - Food sensitivities. Food sensitivities may cause symptoms like diarrhea, reflux, gas, fussiness, constipation or stomach pain.

What do the test results mean?

Positive test with a food they have eaten

A positive allergy test is probably correct if your child has had:

- Hives in the past when eating that food.
- Other "IgE-mediated" allergy symptoms when eating that food.

Your child's doctor will talk with you about ways to protect your child. The doctor may order an epinephrine auto-injector to treat allergic reactions.

Positive test with a food they have never eaten

A positive allergy test could be a false positive if your child has never eaten the food. Your child's doctor may want to get more information through blood work or a supervised feeding in the clinic. This is called a food challenge.

False positive test

This happens if your child has a positive test and has eaten the food without problems. Your child can keep eating that food.

Call **404-785-KIDS (5437)** if you have any questions. Visit choa.org/allergy for additional information.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

