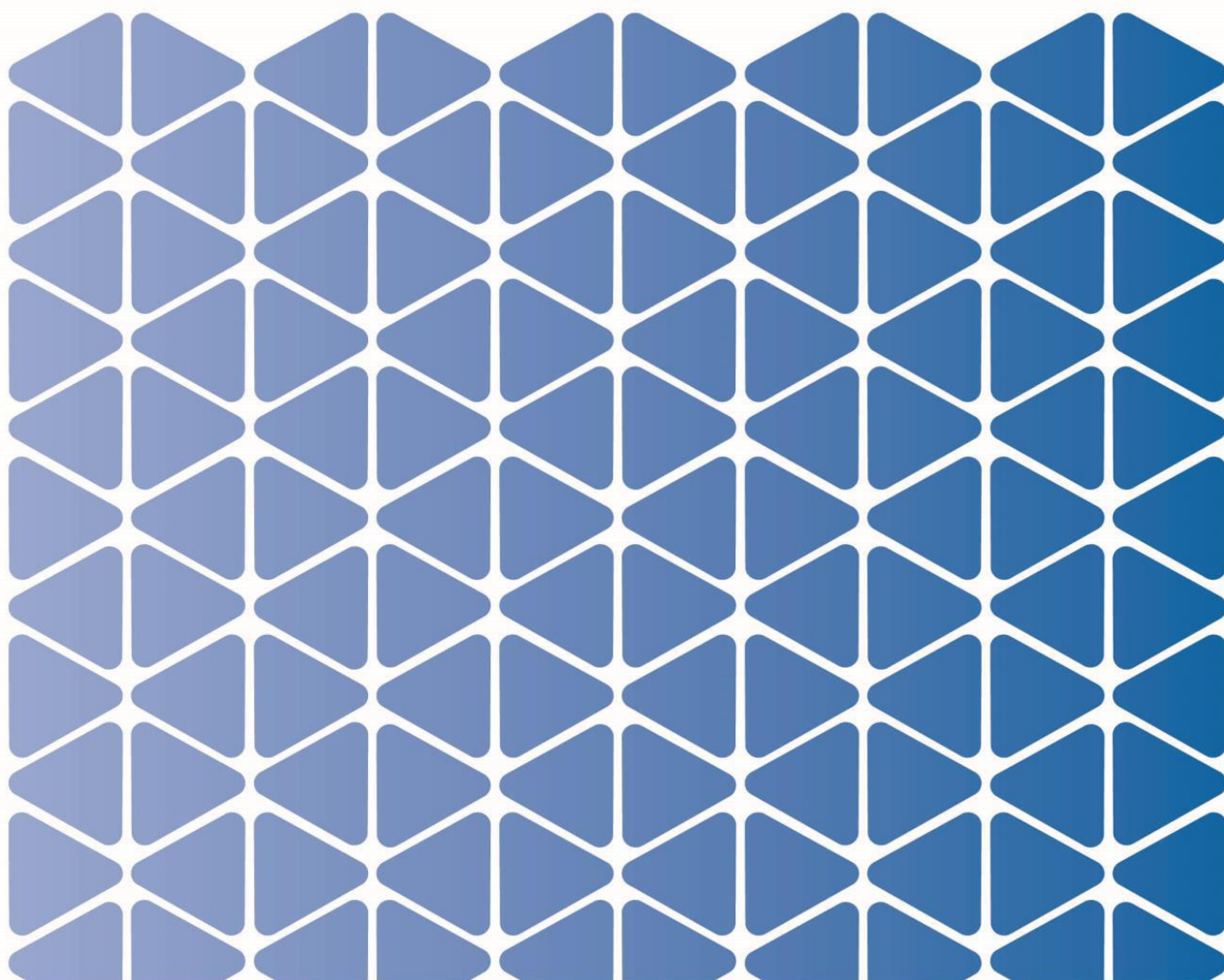


PATIENT INFORMATION

POLLEN-FOOD SYNDROME



What is Pollen Food Syndrome/Oral Allergy Syndrome?

Pollen Food Syndrome, also known as Oral Allergy Syndrome, usually occurs in children and young people who are allergic to pollen from trees, grasses or weeds. These pollens contain proteins of similar structure to those present in certain raw fruits and vegetables. The body mistakes the food for pollen and causes a reaction to the food. This condition usually affects children who get spring or summertime hay fever, but can also occur in children who do not have hay fever but have positive tests to pollen antibodies (skin prick testing or blood tests).

Symptoms

Common symptoms, which usually come on immediately, include:

- Redness, mild swelling or itching of the lips, tongue, inside of the mouth, soft palate and ears
- Itching and mild swelling affecting the throat
- Sneezing, runny nose or eye symptoms

Less common symptoms:

- Abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting
- Rarely, more severe symptoms such as difficulty in swallowing and breathing difficulties can occur. These symptoms need immediate medical attention.

The symptoms of pollen food syndrome usually occur when the fruit or vegetable is eaten raw. This is because cooking, peeling and processing changes the structure of the responsible protein. However, a few people will also react to these foods even when they have been cooked.

What foods are involved?

Common reactions to the foods below are mainly associated with; birch, ragweed, grass and mugwort pollen.

Fruit	Vegetable	Nuts	Spices
FOODS COMMONLY INVOLVED IN POLLEN FOOD SYNDROME			
Apple	Carrot	Hazelnut	
Peach	Celery	Almond	
Pear	Potato	Walnut	
Plum	Soya milk	Brazil nuts	
Cherry	Tomato	Peanut	
Nectarine			
Apricot			
Kiwi			
Strawberry			
FOODS OCCASIONALLY INVOLVED IN POLLEN FOOD SYNDROME			
Orange	Swiss chard		Coriander
Melon	Beans		Cumin
Watermelon	Peas		Aniseed
Mango	Mange tout		Caraway
Pineapple	Bean sprouts		Mustard
	Parsley		Sunflower seeds
	Fennel		Honey
	Cucumber		
	Peppers		
	Courgettes		

You may find that different varieties of the same fruit or vegetable cause reactions, whilst some don't. And you may find that over time, different fruits, vegetables or nuts start to cause symptoms, that haven't previously.

What can you do to avoid you or your child having a reaction?

Most people with hay fever have no allergic symptoms from eating food. If you can eat any of these foods without symptoms, then you can continue eating them.

It is important to distinguish whether reactions to any foods are due to pollen food syndrome or whether they are due to a more serious allergy unrelated to pollen.

You may be able to eat these foods if they are cooked or canned as this will destroy the proteins responsible, the exception to this is roasted nuts which may still cause symptoms.

Preparation of food can cause symptoms. The peeling or scraping of food releases particles in the air which can cause sneezing and/or conjunctivitis and handling of food may cause wheals on the hands. The use of gloves may help with this.

What to do if a reaction occurs

Mild to moderate reactions –

- Mild symptoms of tingling, itching or swelling should settle within 30 – 60 minutes but may be reduced or eliminated more quickly rinsing with water. Antihistamine can be given for these symptoms too.

More severe reactions –

- More severe symptoms affecting breathing, throat swelling or circulatory problems causing fainting need treating with an Adrenaline Autoinjector (AAI) if available and a medical emergency call (999) needs to be made. This is exceedingly rare in Pollen Food Syndrome and more likely with true food allergy.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.