

Allergies (non-food)...

For most children the symptoms are usually mild and might involve a runny nose and itchy eyes, there is no need to keep your child off school with these symptoms. Occasionally a child suffers an allergic reaction that is severe and life threatening.

Some children suffer from what a long-term condition such as **asthma**, **eczema** or **hay fever**. Other children might suffer an allergic reaction in response to something specific, such as a **bee sting** or a **particular medication**. There are lots of different allergens. The most common non-food substances that trigger reactions include: **house dust mites**, **grass** and **tree pollens**, **pet hair** or **skin flakes**, **fungal** or **mould spores**, **wasp** and **bee stings** and certain medication such as **penicillin**.

Allergic reactions affect children in different ways. But some of the most common symptoms include: sneezing and coughing, runny nose, itchy eyes, swelling, shortness of breath, sickness or vomiting, and a rash that looks like a nettle sting.

In rare cases an allergic reaction can be very serious, and emergency medical treatment will be required.

If you think your child has an allergy, you should speak to your local pharmacist or GP, an allergic reaction will not require an urgent appointment unless there are breathing difficulties.

The school nurse, or your local GP practice nurse, are an able source of good medical advice on how to treat your child, they can also liaise with the GP if they need further assistance.

If you are out of hours or can not get an appointment at your GP practice you can access your local Walk in Centre.

Find your local Pharmacist / GP/ Dentist

<http://www.nhs.uk/service directories/pages/service search.aspx>

NHS Direct 0845 4647 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Minor Injury Units (MIU)

Clacton – 9am to 9pm – 7 days a week

Harwich – 9am to 5pm – 7 days a week

MIU only treat the following:

- Sprains and strains
- Broken bones
- Wound infections
- Minor burns and scalds
- Minor head injuries
- Insect and animal bites
- Minor eye injuries
- Injuries to the back, shoulder and chest

Fryatt Hospital and Mayflower Medical Centre,

419 Main Road, Harwich, Essex, CO12 4EX Tel: 01255 201201

Clacton and District Hospital,

Tower Road, Clacton On Sea, Essex, CO15 1LH Tel: 01255 201717

Walk in Centre (WIC)

Colchester – 7am to 10pm – 7 days a week

WIC only treat the following:

- Infection and rashes
- Lacerations
- Emergency contraception and advice
- Stomach upsets
- Cuts and bruises
- Burns and strains

North Colchester Healthcare Centre,

Colchester Primary Care Centre, Turner Road, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5JR Tel: 01206 314015

Useful Links

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

www.eczema.org.uk

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Common Child Conditions

Food Allergies, Allergies & Eczema

Tendring South Schools

Promoting Positive Partnerships



NHS

North East Essex

Food Allergies...

Today food allergies are much more common, affecting one in 20 children under the age of four.

Fortunately the vast majority of children grow out of it. Only around two per cent of adults suffer from food allergies.

There are two main types of reaction – **food allergy and food intolerance**, which is less serious. It's vital to find out whether your child is suffering from a true food allergy, as a mild allergic reaction can progress to a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction the next time the food is eaten.

The timing is usually predictable – a reaction happens within minutes of eating the food. The first signs usually are that the **lips swell** and the **mouth feels itchy**. This may quickly give rise to **nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting** and/or **diarrhoea**. There is often a widespread **rash**.

In most cases, a **food allergy** is caused by one of the following: **milk, eggs, soya, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts (such as hazelnuts), sesame** and in older children, **fish and shellfish**. **Cow's milk** is the most common cause of food allergy in infancy and childhood.

If you think your child may be allergic to a particular food, the first step is to visit your Allergy Nurse or GP who will be able to advise you.

Unfortunately there is no treatment for food allergies other than avoiding the problem food and being ready to respond if your child does eat that food by mistake. **Please inform your child's school if you suspect your child has a food allergy.**

Eczema...

Eczema is one of the most common childhood conditions, affecting one in seven children in the UK under the age of five. The prevalence seems to be increasing roughly in line with the rise in asthma.

Eczema involves inflammation of the skin, causing redness and itching. Children have hypersensitive skin which reacts to allergens in the environment. Different children will react to different allergens and these may alter throughout childhood.

For 80 per cent of children with eczema, the condition appears in the first year of life.

Eczema is often worse in the winter when the cold weather and low humidity increase skin dryness. A flare-up may also be associated with teething, a vaccination or an ongoing infection such as a cold.

Your child will be more susceptible to skin infections. If itchy skin is scratched, it may split. A severe flare up can be associated with a secondary bacterial infection which will usually require treatment.

Children with eczema are also three times more likely to develop asthma compared with other children. They are susceptible to cold sores. In addition they are often prone to warts which can be numerous and persistent.

The first line in treatment consists of emollients to moisturise and soften the skin. This helps to restore elasticity and suppleness and reduce itching. You'll be advised to add bath oil to your child's bath and make sure your child bathes at least once, preferably twice, a day. Frequent bathing will also help keep your child's skin clean and reduce the risk of developing an infection.

There are some straightforward things you can try that can help control your child's symptoms:

- Dress your child in cotton clothes.
- Use cotton bed linen and feather free pillows and duvets.
- Use non biological detergents and avoid fabric conditioners.
- Avoid smoking inside your home - the fumes can irritate your child's skin.
- Avoid furry animals - children with eczema are usually allergic all furry pets.
- Cut house dust mites by vacuuming and damp dusting surfaces regularly. Wooden floors or lino are better than carpet.
- Keep old furry toys in a cupboard and wash them regularly.
- Invest in a mattress cover which will be useful when your child stays away from home.
- Try to make sure your house is well ventilated. A damp environment encourages the growth of fungi and moulds, which may aggravate the eczema.
- Hard water may irritate your child's skin. If you live in a hard water area try a water softener.
- Grass pollen can be a problem during summer. Avoid freshly cut grass and grass cuttings.
- Keep your child's nails short to avoid harmful scratching.

Children generally grow out of eczema and can show a significant improvement by the age of five. A significant percentage will be clear of the condition by their teens.