

SFHAL6

Perform a challenge test for allergy



Overview

This standard is about conducting challenge tests (also called provocation tests). They are used to exclude allergy or to confirm it when other ways of diagnosing allergy do not give complete certainty. It may also be used to confirm that an allergy has resolved. Undertaking a challenge test to either food or drugs can potentially lead to life-threatening or fatal reactions and must always be conducted by personnel fully trained in allergy within a specialist allergy service.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 ensure that the challenge is being carried out for suitable reasons and that there are no contra-indications
- P2 in the case of drug allergy, determine the risks and benefits before deciding whether to perform a challenge
- P3 ensure that you have a thorough knowledge about the individual's history and confirm the specifics of the test
- P4 select the challenge schedule that is most suited to the individual
- P5 give full verbal and written information to the individual or parent about the test and what they can expect from it and gain their written valid consent
- P6 take standard precautions for infection prevention and control
- P7 provide a safe environment with resuscitation equipment readily available and usable
- P8 ensure that you are trained in Basic Life Support and up to date
- P9 check that the individual is in good health for the challenge to proceed
- P10 give the individual time and opportunity to ask questions at all times during the challenge procedure and be accessible to the individual throughout the course of the procedure
- P11 carry out baseline observations as per protocol
- P12 conduct the challenge test according to protocol and guidelines where these are available
- P13 stop the test at any stage that a positive reaction occurs and administer emergency medication if required
- P14 continue to monitor symptoms and observations and engage the level of help required to manage those symptoms
- P15 ensure that the individual remains under supervision for the recommended period after the challenge has been completed or stopped according to guidelines
- P16 provide contact details to enable the individual to report any delayed reactions
- P17 ensure that the individual has had no adverse reaction and is well enough to leave
- P18 provide the written outcome of the challenge test to the referring doctor, General Practitioner and all relevant healthcare professionals and a simple version of outcome to the individual or responsible adult
- P19 based on the outcome of the challenge, provide the individual with written and oral advice that they can understand about the reintroduction or continued avoidance of the food or drug

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 common allergic conditions and their presentation
- K2 severe allergic conditions, their development and risks
- K3 causes of anaphylaxis
- K4 symptoms and features of anaphylaxis/acute allergic reaction and how to monitor them
- K5 how to recognise a severe adverse allergic reaction
- K6 the principles of valid consent, and how to obtain valid consent from individuals
- K7 the criteria for conducting challenge tests on a individual
- K8 how to balance the risks against benefits of undertaking a challenge procedure
- K9 protocols and guidelines for challenge testing and aftercare following challenge tests
- K10 reactions to challenge tests
- K11 management of reactions to challenge tests
- K12 how to interpret challenge test results
- K13 the rationale and method of the reintroduction of substances to an individual following a negative challenge test
- K14 infection control policy and practice

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Additional Information

External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB6 Assessment and treatment planning

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