

## IFAN recommendations for best practice integrated services in food allergy diagnosis and management in Ireland.

There is a welcome increase in public and medical awareness of food allergy in Ireland, in line with IFAN's overall educational aims and strategy.

There remains, however, much confusion and misinformation regarding the value of allergy testing and the role it plays in the diagnosis and management of food allergy.

Tests such as IgE blood testing and skin prick testing merely identify food sensitization-an indicator of possible food allergy.

Food challenge is the gold standard of food allergy diagnosis.

Removal of food from the diet, particularly a child's diet, based solely on the result of an allergy test is not considered international best practice.

IFAN is very happy to engage with its members and others who wish to offer a package of care that fully supports and protects affected patients and their families. Services that offer testing without preceding clinical history or without same-centre access to food challenge are not recommended by IFAN.

IFAN supports services that provide a model of care that meets international best practice standards. The international "gold standard" package of care is currently on offer in 5 Irish centres and comprises:

1. An allergy service led by a consultant with training in the management of food allergy and coexisting atopic conditions and competence in the interpretation of allergy testing results.
2. Patient encounter starts with a clinic visit with a clinician prior to any testing so that an allergy focused history can be taken.
3. History-driven, accountable, judicious testing (skin prick or serum IgE) based on the allergy focused history, not performed as part of a standard screening panel of allergens.
4. Patient access to the lead consultant to discuss the significance of any test results.
5. Training in how and when to administer an adrenaline autoinjector if indicated and prescribed.
6. A Consultant led food challenge service in order to allow for timely conclusive diagnosis in the event of food sensitisation demonstrated by testing.
7. Signposting to dietetic services in cases of milk allergy and multiple food allergy

Centres that are currently providing this package of care (subject to change, others may be added as allergy services develop and IFAN is willing to support these developments):

Cork: Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Cork University Hospital. Led by Professor Jonathan Hourihane.

Dublin: National Children's Hospital Tallaght and Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin. Led by Dr. Aideen Byrne.

Galway: Department of Paediatrics, University College Hospital. Led by Dr. Edina Moylett.

Louth: Department of Paediatrics, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda. Led by Dr. John Fitzsimons.