

EXPERTS IN THE TREATMENT OF FOOD ALLERGIES

Recognized for their expertise and innovation in treating food allergies, our doctors provide the latest research-based, treatment strategies and technology with a personalized approach.

"Patients and their families no longer have to live with the fear of food. We are excited about advances in the field of food allergy that allow us to offer a newer option to help patients with food allergies." Dr. Linden Ho



Dr. Linden Ho is dual board-certified in Allergy and Immunology and Pediatrics. He completed his fellowship training in Allergy Immunology at National Jewish Medical & Research Center and University of Colorado School of Medicine.



Dr. Sonia Guirguis is dual board-certified in Allergy and Immunology and Pediatrics. She completed her fellowship training in Allergy, Immunology and Pulmonary Diseases at Cornell University Medical Center - New York Hospital, New York, NY.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Every patient is special and unique to us, and will receive a personalized plan for understanding and managing their particular allergy related condition.

Communication and education are key principles. We make it a priority to answer every question and address all concerns. We keep in touch with referring physicians and school nurses when applicable to ensure continuity of care. We remain available for follow up and emergencies.



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Oral Immunotherapy

For the treatment of food allergy



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WHAT IS OIT?

Oral immunotherapy, or OIT, is a proactive treatment for food allergy that trains the immune system to tolerate a food so that the patient can eat the food without an allergic reaction.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF OIT?

The goal is to decrease the patient's sensitivity to the food. OIT can decrease the risk of reactions due to cross-contamination by 95 percent. Some patients will eventually be able to consume the food in normal serving amounts without any reaction, but need to remain on a daily maintenance dose so that the desensitization is not lost. It is not yet known whether OIT can be a cure, and studies are ongoing.

WHAT FOODS CAN OIT TREAT?

Most of the studies have been done with peanut, but OIT can also be done for tree nuts, milk, egg, wheat and sesame. If the patient has more than one food allergy, two or more foods can be treated at a time.



WHAT IS THE OIT PROCESS?

At the first appointment, the patient is given a very small amount of the food, usually 1 mg, and observed in the office for an hour to be sure it is tolerated. This dose is then given daily at home and increased every two weeks at an "updose" visit in our office. Within a year or less, the patient will usually tolerate the equivalent of one or two peanuts or tree nuts, the amount being different for other food allergens such as egg or milk. Skin and blood tests will then be repeated to determine if the food sensitivity has decreased.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS OIT?

Peanut, milk and egg OIT have been shown to desensitize 60 to 80 percent of patients. In a recent study with a commercial peanut product in patients 4 to 17 years of age, 75 percent of patients could eat two peanuts by the end of a year.

HOW SAFE IS OIT?

Reactions during OIT can occur but they are mostly mild, consisting of stomach upset or mild hives in our experience. However, more serious reactions including anaphylaxis can potentially occur. Any updose is always performed in the office with observation for at least an hour. All medications are readily available to treat any reaction. Because reactions could occur at home as well, parents must be familiar with their anaphylaxis plan. Our updosing schedule is intentionally very gradual and is meant to minimize the risk of reactions.

WHAT ARE ALTERNATIVES TO OIT?

Avoidance of the food allergen is still the standard of care. Most allergists do not perform OIT although there may be more adoption of the treatment now that the FDA has approved a commercial peanut OIT product. The downside of not doing anything, however, is that peanut and nut allergies tend to worsen spontaneously over time, so that a mild to moderate allergy may become severe. We will always discuss the pros and cons of OIT with the family.

IS OIT COVERED BY INSURANCE?

Most insurances cover OIT. Call our billing office if you have questions.