

Managing an anaphylaxis reaction triggered by certain food eaten before/after exercise

Department of Allergy

Information for Patients

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What is food dependent exercise induced anaphylaxis (FDEIA)?

Food dependent exercise induced anaphylaxis (FDEIA) is a rare condition where eating certain food(s) before or, very rarely after, exercise causes a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

The foods can be eaten at other times when exercise is not involved, so exercise is a factor with the foods in causing the symptoms.

Symptoms may include:

- itching, rash (hives)
- swelling of the face
- shortness of breath, wheezing
- feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- stomach (abdominal) cramps
- diarrhoea
- dizziness, feeling faint

Very physical activity such as jogging, running, dancing and cycling are more commonly linked with exercise-induced anaphylaxis. Mild exercises such as walking and garden work, can also cause a reaction in some cases.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Other possible factors that can cause FDEIA

Anaphylaxis can also happen if there other factors too. Examples are:

- Pain killers such as ibuprofen or aspirin
- All alcoholic beverages
- Periods in women
- Extremes of temperature (either high heat and humidity or cold exposure)
- High pollen exposure for patients with hay fever
- Infections

Exercise is the most common cofactor.

What are the main foods that can cause FDEIA?

The main food triggers for FDEIA are:

- wheat
- shellfish
- fruit and vegetables
- The amount of food and how it is processed may be important in some patients.

How is it managed?

- For most people not eating these foods for 4 to 6 hours before, and 1 hour after, exercising is recommended.
- Always carry 2 in date adrenaline pens (auto injectors) with you
- Wear a medical alert bracelet or talisman to let medical professionals know
- Do not exercise alone but with a buddy to make sure you are safe.
- People with FDEIA can eat the foods without symptoms when there are no other co-factors such as exercise, drinking alcohol etc.

What should I do when I am going to eat out before or after an exercise?

- Call ahead
- Speak with chef or the host if you are eating in other people's houses directly if possible
- Ask about how the food is prepared, how surfaces are kept clean to prevent cross-contamination of surfaces and utensils

What should I do if I have a reaction?

If you have symptoms of a severe allergic reaction, such as:

Feeling lightheaded, breathless, wheezy, or losing consciousness.

1. Lie flat with your feet up until help arrives. If breathing is difficult you can sit, but do not stand or walk
2. Use your adrenaline pen in one leg
3. **Call 999 for an ambulance and say you are having anaphylaxis (“ana-fil-ax-is”).**
4. If there is no improvement after 5 to 15 minutes use your 2nd adrenaline pen in the other leg
5. Take antihistamines as prescribed (if not already taken).
6. If you have asthma use your inhaler.

If you have symptoms of a mild or moderate allergic reaction, such as:

Swelling of lips, face, or eyes, hives, tingling mouth, abdominal pain/being sick

Action plan:

1. Get your adrenaline pen
2. Take antihistamines as prescribed
3. Phone family/emergency contact
4. Watch for worsening symptoms, if in doubt or rapidly deteriorating use your adrenaline pen

Contact details

If you have non-urgent queries, ring the Asthma and Allergy Nurses on 0116 258 3557 Mon to Fri, 9.00am to 4.30pm or contact your GP if any advice needed.

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