

## Food sensitivity testing blood drawing instructions

**This information leaflet describes how to safely use the food sensitivity test blood sampling kit. Please make sure that you follow the instructions carefully so that we can give you/your child the best care. If you have any questions, please contact us (details at the end of the leaflet).**

Your healthcare professional has recommended that you/your child has a food sensitivity blood test. Taking the sample at home or at your GP practice means you or your child will not have to visit the hospital. It involves taking a small amount of either your or your child's blood which you post straight to the laboratory.

### How does this food sensitivity test work?

The blood sample will be tested for antibodies (a marker of possible food sensitivity) to a range of triggers (foods) that a health professional may consider you or your child may need to temporarily or permanently avoid eating.

Research in the area of IgG mediated immune responses is complex, and sometimes conflicted. The presence of IgG is possibly a normal response of the immune system to exposure to food, but if chronic clinical symptoms do continually occur, simple and focused avoidance strategies may improve otherwise debilitating consequences that if ignored, can result in certain key nutrients falling below recommended levels. In a proportion of people with intolerances this effect can cause secondary consequences that maybe averted with careful avoidance for a period of time.

Your consultant/healthcare professional will let you know the results that are important for you/your child and will tell you how these food sensitivities can be avoided and managed. Before starting a diet based on FOX results, it is mandatory to evaluate the results with a physician or a dietician (to avoid deficiencies).

### How does a food sensitivity differ from other types of allergies and sensitivities?

"Food Allergy" occurs when immunologic hypersensitivity occurs from IgE binding to the allergen. IgE (Immunoglobulin E) allergies are immediate responses to an antigen that has entered the body. This type of allergy is not detected with this test, and should usually be considered first.

"Autoimmune Diseases" are different, and your healthcare professional may choose to test you for coeliac disease if appropriate to your clinical history. This is not an allergy, but a specific reaction to gluten found in many foods, which can cause diarrhoea, weight loss, and malnutrition.

"Food Sensitivity" is a reaction to food without an immunologically based trigger, and again is not something this test is intended to consider. Food sensitivity can occur from an immunologic, but delayed, reaction to food when a part of the body's immune system overreacts to a protein with IgG & IgA antibodies. Therefore, whilst still a type of allergy that does have the involvement of immunological systems, it differs from more immediate forms of Allergy that occur when an IgE antibody overreacts to a food.

Whilst this may appear to diminish the importance of identification of this form of allergy, it does not, because whilst the onset of reaction to food may not be immediate, the chronic long term consequences of living with a food sensitivity should not be neglected.

This test detects IgG (without IgA), and so can assist a healthcare professional assessing its findings, as part of a wider clinical picture.

### When is a sensitivity test used?

When your healthcare professional recommends it, having exhausted the recommended order for investigation. They may sometimes decide to run the tests concurrently when a diagnosis is more urgently needed, and the combined results are being used in a wider clinical context.

Generally, your healthcare professional will make a diagnosis of a specific food allergy by considering the following sequence of information which together will then combine to make an informed conclusion. This will include an initial full medical history, physical examination, skin prick testing, a carefully selected food-specific IgE test that accurately detects levels, and, as appropriate, oral food challenges/exclusions to suspected food allergens in some instances.

### What do I need to do?

You will have received this kit by post if you or your child have agreed to take a sample of blood. Once you have posted the sample to the laboratory, the test will be performed, and the results will be sent to your food sensitivity team. A member of the team will contact you by phone or letter to explain the results and discuss the next steps and recommendations for you/your child's care.

If you or your child have any concerns about taking the sample after reading this leaflet or watching the video (on [www.biodiagnostics.co.uk](http://www.biodiagnostics.co.uk)), please contact the team. You may be able to ask your practice nurse or GP to take the sample for you.

Your kit will contain:

- this information leaflet
- two safety lancets (tool you will need to prick the skin)
- one blood collection tube (labelled with the identification code assigned to you/your child)
- one transport mailer
- two alcohol swabs
- two plasters
- a prepaid return envelope

### Please read this BEFORE taking the sample:

- Please take the sample within 1 week of receiving this kit.
- The whole process should take 15-20 minutes.
- You/your child are able to eat and drink normally.
- All regular medications (including antihistamines) can continue as normal.
- Each lancet can only be used once.
- Please post the sample on the same day the blood has been taken, but you can store the sample in the fridge overnight if this is not possible.
- Avoid doing the test at the end of the week or at the weekend/national holidays to avoid delays in the sample reaching the laboratory.
- Take time to explain the procedure to your child before you start.
- Remember that if you are anxious, your child will feel anxious. Try to make the environment as relaxed as possible.
- You may find it helpful for your child to have some distraction such as watching a video or having someone else reading them a story. Remember they will only have one hand available while the sample is being taken.
- Store the kit out of the reach of children. The testing of any child under 18 years old should be performed under the supervision of their parent or guardian or a healthcare professional.
- If the user has a communicable disease (for example, HIV) this test kit should not be used.
- In the unlikely event of your child feeling unwell, stop collecting the sample and allow them to lie down. Seek medical advice if you are concerned.

### Taking the sample

Before you start

- Make sure you/your child have had a drink (a small glass of water or juice) 30 minutes before taking the sample.
- Please make sure you are not disturbed, and that you have a clean environment, enough space, and the room you are using is at a comfortable temperature.
- Wash yours/your child's, hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for 2-3 minutes.
- Make sure you/your child's hands are warm, and you are sitting comfortably.

## Prepare your equipment

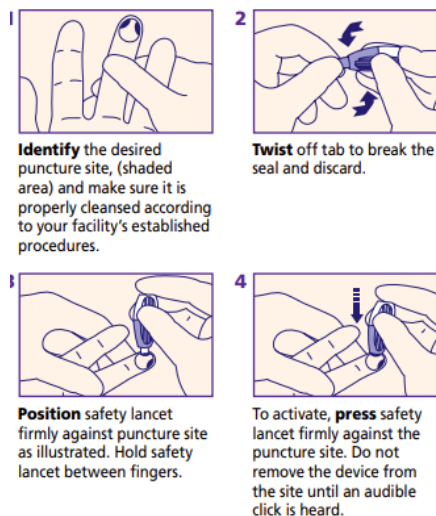
- Place all the items from the box onto a clean table.
- Open both the alcohol wipes.
- Unscrew the lid of the labelled blood collection tube and put it on the table.
- The sample tube is pre-labelled with a sticker to link the results to you/your child.
- Clean your/your child's middle or ring fingertip with an alcohol wipe. Wipe the fingertip several times and allow it to dry.



- Twist the safety end of the lancet, remove it and place it on the table.

## Take the sample

- Place the end of the lancet firmly on the side of the cleaned fingertip. Press the trigger until you hear a click. This will make a small puncture in the skin and you should see a small drop of blood appear.
- Wipe away the first drop of blood with the second alcohol wipe.



- Start to massage your/your child's finger from the middle of the finger towards the puncture site in stroking movements.
- Continue massaging the finger and collect the blood drops, using a scooping motion, into the sample tube.
- Remember to release the finger in between each stroke to allow the blood to flow back into the fingertip. You may find lowering your/your child's hand helps the blood flow more easily.
- The sample tube has two lines on it. The lower line is marked 400 and the upper line is marked 600. Try to fill the tube to the 600 mark (400 is the minimum amount that is needed to complete the test).



If the blood flow stops:

- wipe the fingertip again using an alcohol wipe
- lower the hand more if you have not already done so.
- You may need to use the spare lancet to puncture the finger again if you are still finding it difficult to fill the tube.

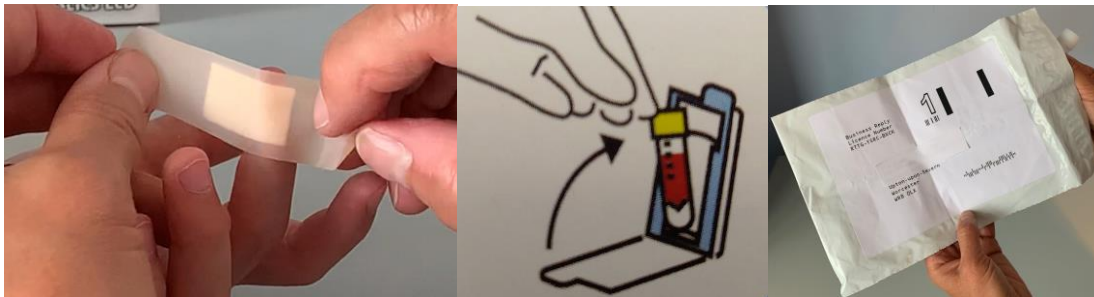
Sealing the sample

- Once there is enough blood in the collection tube, push the lid back on securely until a click is heard.
- Leave the tube to stand upright on the table for 15 minutes. You can use an egg cup or small glass to put the tube in so that it doesn't fall over.



Apply the plaster and prepare to send

- Wipe the finger clean with the alcohol wipe.
- Apply pressure until the bleeding stops if needed.
- Allow the finger to dry.
- Put a plaster on the finger.
- After 15 minutes, place the blood tube into the transport mailer.



Post your/your child's sample

- Put the transport mailer containing the sample into the pre-paid envelope and make sure it is sealed.
- The envelope can be posted at a normal post box or handed in at a post office.
- If you cannot get the sample for any reason, please tell us using the email address below or contact your food sensitivity healthcare professional.



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