FOOD ALLERGY in INFANTS and CHILDREN

- **Definition:**
  - Food allergies are IgE, non-IgE or mixed immune mediated hypersensitivity reactions.

- **Common food triggers:**
  - egg, cow’s milk protein, soy, wheat, nuts (peanut and tree nuts), fish, shellfish, sesame.

- **Food allergy reaction patterns** may be broadly grouped into
  - acute, potentially life threatening reactions, occurring after accidental exposure to allergen.
  - chronic allergic reactions, due to regular ingestion of allergen, through breast milk, formula or solid diet includes progressively intensifying generalised eczema and gastrointestinal symptoms

- **Complications** of undiagnosed allergies (especially multiple foods or chronic allergen ingestion) include
  - anaphylaxis, significant QOL impacts, disordered feeding, failure to thrive, malabsorption and chronic inflammation
  - Infants commonly require Allergy multidisciplinary support of nutrition and may need elemental formula

**Information Required**

- Description of symptoms including timeline.
- Previous anaphylaxis.
- Presence of any chronic skin, gastrointestinal and/or respiratory symptoms
- Indicate concerns re failure to thrive and feeding.
- Current weight and height (plus birth measurements for infants)
- List type of formula and solids already in diet

**Investigations Required**

- Staple food mix and nut mix specific IgE have poor sensitivity and specificity (not recommended.)
- Failure to thrive investigations
  - (CBP, ECU, LFT incl Albumin, CaMgPhos, Immunoglobulins, Vitamin D, ESR, Fe studies, B12, folate, zinc)

**Fax to Allergy and Clinical Immunology Service - Ph: 8204 7483**

Phone FMC Allergy/Clinical Immunology Registrar or Immunologist to gain initial PBS subsidised approval for elemental formula and Adrenaline Autoinjector (Epipen*) Ph: 08204 7201

**Red Flags**

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to Emergency Department

- Anaphylaxis (please also refer to Anaphylaxis referral guidelines)
- Food protein induced Entercolitis Syndrome (FPIES)
- Severe failure to thrive
- Infected eczema with concerns about sepsis

**Suggested GP Management**

- Early referral of infants with suspected food allergies
- Adrenaline autoinjector and Action plan for anaphylaxis and any suspected nut reactions
- Consider elemental formula for infants
- Influenza and yellow fever vaccinations may be contraindicated in some egg allergic children. Seek Specialist advice.
- Risk of vaccination reactions is not increased in food allergic children. Routine vaccinations should proceed

**Clinical Resources**

- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology (ASCIA) website  
- ASCIA - Anaphylaxis Clinical Practice Guidelines  