

Sesame free diet

Your child has been diagnosed with an allergy to sesame. This information leaflet is a guide to avoiding all sesame and sesame containing products.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the paediatric allergy dietitians on 020 7188 8494.

Food labelling

Sesame is classed as one of the 14 most allergenic foods. This means that food labelling rules require that pre packaged foods sold in the UK and EU show clearly on the label if it contains sesame seeds (or one of its ingredients contains them), allergens must now be emphasised on the label e.g. by listing them in **bold**. This law also applies to the catering sector; when eating out or buying takeaway food, food businesses are required to provide information on allergenic ingredients.

May contain traces

Some products carry the label "may contain traces of sesame". These are products that are not intended to contain sesame but may have traces of the allergen due to manufacturing or marketing practices. Sesame seeds are difficult to control in the food industry and cross contamination is difficult to prevent. **We recommend you also avoid these products.**

It is important to read the ingredients label every time before buying a product to check if it contains sesame.

Foods sold loose

Some foods also now have to comply with these labelling rules, such as foods sold loose for example bakeries, delicatessens and butchers.

Cross contamination

This can be a particular issue in bakeries and at patisserie counters, where unwrapped bread and baked products may become contaminated with sesame seeds when they are made on the same premises.

Eating out

The catering sector is now required by law to provide information on whether their food/s may contain sesame seeds. Sesame is used particularly frequently in Thai, Japanese, Chinese, Turkish and Middle Eastern cooking. Be careful with stir-fries, curries, bread products and vegetarian dishes. We recommend that you always ask if an item is sesame free and stress the seriousness of the allergic condition. If staff cannot give assurance that dish is safe, it is best to avoid it.

Foods containing sesame

Sesame as a major ingredient:

- **tahini** is a sesame paste and is particularly used in Turkish and Middle Eastern Cuisine.
- **hummus** is a paste made from chickpeas and tahini.
- **halvah** also contains tahini.

Note of caution: the above three products are sometimes added to other foods.

Other common sources of sesame include:

- bakery products such as speciality breads, bagels and pastries
- biscuits
- crackers, breadsticks and rice cakes
- muesli.

Some pre-packed delicatessen and processed foods contain sesame – always read the label. For example: noodles, dips, soups, sausages, samosas, processed meats, vegetable burgers, chutney, salad dressings, mixed spices, muesli, cereal and confectionary bars. Sesame is also an unexpected ingredient in some herbal drinks, for example Aqua Libra.

Sesame oil

Sesame oil should also be avoided. Sesame oil is used unrefined in food products (it is made by cold pressing sesame seeds), which means it can cause an allergic reaction. It is popular in oriental cooking and can also be used in salad dressings.

Useful sources of information

British Dietetics Association

t: 0121 200 8080

w: www.bda.uk.com

The Eat Well Guide - Food Standards Agency

w: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx

Food and allergy updates – email or text alert service

w: www.food.gov.uk/about-us/subscribe

The Anaphylaxis Campaign

t: 01252 542029

w: www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

Allergy UK

t: 01322 619898

w: www.allergyuk.org

Can I eat there?

w: www.canieatthere.co.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's diet, please contact the paediatric allergy dietitians on 020 7188 8494 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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