

Suspected NSAID and paracetamol allergy

This leaflet answers some of your questions about non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and how we investigate a possible allergy to them. If you have any questions, please speak to a nurse or doctor looking after your child.

What are NSAIDs?

Your child has been referred to our children's drug allergy service because of a suspected allergic reaction to NSAIDs.

There are lots of medicines which are NSAIDs. They include prescribed medicines and ones you buy from a pharmacy or shopdrugs, which are used to reduce pain, inflammation or fever. They include aspirin, ibuprofen, diclofenac, mefenamic acid and naproxen.

Paracetamol is not a member of the NSAID group but, because of its painkilling and fever-reducing properties, it is often discussed together with NSAIDs.

Reactions caused by NSAIDs

Your child can have a reaction to an NSAID even if they have taken it before without a problem.

Some reactions happen within minutes of taking the drug, and they can appear in different ways, for example, a red itchy rash, hives or swelling of the lips and around the eyes. Very rarely, some people can have a serious reaction called anaphylaxis. This affects breathing and blood circulation and can be life-threatening.

Other allergic reactions can take hours or days to appear. For example, an NSAID might trigger asthma flare in people who have asthma or nettle rash in people who have a skin condition called urticaria. Some people with nasal polyps are likely to have NSAID-sensitive asthma. However, this is extremely rare in children. Although NSAID reactions typically affect skin and airways, they sometimes cause problems with blood and internal organs such as liver and kidneys.

Children sometimes develop a flat red rash (maculopapular rash) after they have been given paracetamol or ibuprofen for a fever, or when they have a viral cold. This might not be an allergy, and in these cases, a medicine (drug) provocation test helps us to know if it is safe for a child to be given the medicine in future.

What happens next

There are no accurate blood or skin tests for the diagnosis of NSAID allergy. To confirm if your child is allergic to an NSAID, we will plan a medicine provocation test in our day care unit. This will involve giving your child incremental (increasing) amounts of the relevant NSAID.

This test will be done under the close supervision of nurses, and a doctor will be available immediately if needed. If an allergic reaction occurs in your child, we will treat it immediately. Your child will remain under our care for 2 hours after the symptoms have been dealt with, or for 2 hours after the last dose of medicine if no symptoms were observed. In an unlikely case of a severe reaction, we might decide to keep your child under observation for longer, or even admit them to hospital overnight. There is more information on medicine allergy testing in our department, at [web](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/resources/patient-information/suspected-drug-allergy-investigation.pdf) www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/resources/patient-information/suspected-drug-allergy-investigation.pdf

It is possible for your child to be allergic to just 1 medicine from the NSAID family or to several. Your doctor might suggest testing more than 1 medicine to see if your child will be safe taking other medicines from this group. If your child is allergic to more than 1 NSAID and needs an anti-inflammatory medicine for their condition, such as rheumatoid disease, we will discuss this with you.

If none of the above options are suitable for your child and they still need NSAID treatment, your doctor will discuss desensitisation to the medicine with you. This involves the administration of multiple incremental doses over a day, with ongoing intake afterwards to maintain tolerance.

Until your child's NSAID allergy is confirmed

Until it is determined if your child is allergic to NSAIDs, they must avoid all NSAIDs. Some medicines you buy in a pharmacy or shop contain an NSAID, so always check with a pharmacist and read all medicine labels carefully.

What to do if your child has fever or pain before testing

If your child can cope with paracetamol, it can be used for treating fever or pain. Paracetamol can be given every 4 to 6 hours, with a maximum of 4 doses in 24 hours. In young people, codeine is sometimes used for pain relief.

Booking a medicine test appointment

Within 2 weeks of receiving the clinic letter, you will receive a link via a text message to book a date and time slot for the medicine test appointment. If you do not receive the text message, or you have any issues booking the appointment, please [phone](tel:02071886390) 020 7188 6390.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, please contact the children's allergy nurses, [phone](tel:02071883300) 020 7188 3300, Monday to Friday, or book a nurse telephone call back at, [web](http://my.drdoctor.co.uk/clinic/childrensallergynersehelpline) my.drdoctor.co.uk/clinic/childrensallergynersehelpline

If you would like to cancel or change your child's drug allergy testing appointment, please go to contact our day case co-ordinator, [phone](tel:02071886390) 020 7188 6390.

For more information on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [web](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets) www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

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