

Patient information

Kiwi fruit allergy

Background

- Kiwi fruit has been recognised as a food allergen in adults in the UK since 1980 and in children since 1990. Since then, as more people are eating kiwi fruit, there have been more reports of allergy to kiwi fruits in both children and adults.
- There is therefore not much information on Kiwi fruit allergy in scientific journals or books. The information in this leaflet is based on the experience reported in one study only.

Symptoms

- **Allergic symptoms experienced in Kiwi fruit allergy, and how often they occur are shown in the table.**

Symptom	%	Symptom	%
Tingling or sore mouth	70	Vomiting	20
Tight throat / swallowing difficulty	50	Stomach ache	20
Swelling of the tongue or lips	40	Wheeze	15
Swelling of the face	25	Cyanosis (going blue)	3
Rash ('hives')	20	Collapse	3

- We can see from these figures that reactions to Kiwi fruit can be serious and affect the breathing or the circulatory systems. More serious symptoms were more likely in younger children.
- Most symptoms occur immediately or at least within 30 minutes of eating Kiwi fruit.

- Kiwi fruit shares allergens with other foods and with latex. Individuals who are allergic to Kiwi fruit may also occasionally also be allergic to bananas and avocado and to latex.

Allergy testing

- When Kiwi fruit allergy is suspected it can be confirmed by allergy tests, either skin prick tests or blood tests. You may be asked to bring a fresh Kiwi for testing, or be offered a challenge if these tests are negative where allergy is suspected following symptoms with contact.
- Kiwi fruit is one of the so-called Latex fruits, which means that they can share allergens with latex and the other latex fruits. These are avocado, banana, chestnut, mango, melon, papaya, passion fruit, pineapple, potato, strawberry and tomato. A person who is allergic to kiwi fruit may also be allergic to one or more of the latex fruits. Tests for cross-reacting allergies may be useful where these allergies are suspected.

Treatment

- All sources of kiwi fruit (ingestion and contact) need to be avoided.
- Kiwi is not one of the 14 EEC foods that are classed as allergens (so will not be listed in bold type on ingredient labels). Labels should be carefully checked for the word Kiwi and maybe hidden in fruit salads, smoothies and green coloured sweets.
- Some people may need to avoid other cross-reacting foods as well.
- Your allergy doctor will provide you with an individualised emergency action plan. The plan will include antihistamines (Cetirizine) and possibly an adrenaline injection (EpiPen or Jext). Needing to carry an adrenaline injection depends on person's age, how serious the reaction was and the risk of further exposure.

With thanks to the Children's Allergy Clinic, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, for permission to reproduce this information.

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