



Oral Desensitization – Pistachio



What is it?

Oral Desensitization to pistachio is a way to enable your child to not react to small accidental exposures to pistachio.

The idea behind food desensitization is to gradually build up tolerance to that particular food by giving it initially in minute quantities. When those quantities are tolerated, the amount is progressively increased up to a certain threshold.

It is important to recognize that pistachio oral desensitization has currently not been shown to result in permanent tolerance. When oral desensitization is discontinued, it is expected that within a few months your child will revert back to their initial state of not tolerating pistachio at all. Therefore, pistachio desensitization therapy is currently considered lifelong treatment.

The protocol is designed to minimize the risk of anaphylaxis with accidental ingestion of small quantities of pistachio.

Why do this?

There are many reasons why parents choose to do this. A number of studies have shown significant improvement in quality of life of families whose child can tolerate small amounts of the food they are allergic to. These families report eating outside the home, travelling again or even having pistachio at home. The best person to decide whether to do this is you.

What do I get?

You will need to purchase ground up pistachio or grind pistachio yourself (not in a grinder machine, but manually). Make sure the pistachio is not contaminated with other ingredients.

You will also need to bring things to mix the pistachio with so that your child will not have difficulty with the texture of ground up pistachio. For instance, if your child is not allergic to the following, bring with you yoghurt, apple sauce, chocolate mousse etc.

How is it performed?

We start with a miniscule dose and increase from there. The first dose is 5 mg of the allergen, while the final dose is 500 mg. For the initial dose, you will need to be in our clinic for 1 – 1.5 hours. Dose escalations occur at a minimum every two weeks (can be more than 2 weeks if you desire). This is performed in our clinic and your child needs to be observed for 30 minutes for subsequent doses. Bring your EpiPen to your appointment. Your child must be in good health and must not eat or drink 30 minutes before the scheduled appointment. If the dose escalation is scheduled to occur during a time that our clinic is closed, stay at the current dose until the next available appointment.

Frequently taking antihistamines, such as rupatadine 2.5 ml – 5 ml daily during build-up can minimize reactions such as oral discomfort and mild hives. This is optional.

What do I do after each appointment?

- Take the dose every day at the same time.
- Take with a meal or snack
- Avoid exercise 2 hours before or after
- Hold dose or decrease dose by 50% if your child has a fever or is ill with a viral illness
- Resume dose at home if you have missed less than 3 daily doses
- Contact us if you have missed for than 3 daily doses

Pistachio desensitization is only offered to children less than 5 years of age.