

News release

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For immediate release

Food allergy or intolerance – would you know?

Would you know the difference between a food allergy or intolerance? Local dieticians can help you find out the fascinating facts behind some of your favourite foods.

Around one in 100 people will suffer from an allergy, but many more will suffer from food intolerance.

During Food Allergy and Food Intolerance Week (23-29 January) the NHS in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is urging those who experience a reaction to certain foods to learn the difference and help manage their health better.

Dr Chris Trzcinski, a GP and co-chairman of West Leicestershire CCG, said: “Those suffering from a food allergy will find they have distinctive symptoms very quickly – sometimes within minutes – which can be caused by a very small amount of the problem food, and in extreme cases can be life-threatening.

“Reactions could range from tingling or swelling of the lips and tongue, to a runny nose, rash or nausea, and in more serious cases it could also cause respiratory distress and anaphylaxis (collapse).

“The most common causes of food allergies include eggs, peanuts or tree nuts, mushrooms, fish and shellfish. Food allergies should always be diagnosed through tests and by examining the patient’s medical history.”

Gulshinder Chattha, senior dietician working with NHS patients across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, said: “Intolerance to food will depend on the amount eaten, present long-lasting symptoms including tummy aches, bloating, diarrhoea or constipation and is not life-threatening.

“We work with the individual to assess their diet and eating patterns to find a solution to what foods might be causing problems to their health. Once we have worked out what is upsetting them, which could be a wide range of products from dairy, wheat or nuts we can plan with the patient to avoid these foods on a daily basis.

For more information on Food Allergy and Food Intolerance Week visit <http://www.allergyuk.org/> or NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

ENDS

For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk.

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving on-going transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.