



PRESS STATEMENT

Response by food intolerance testing company to the news that NICE is to release new guidance to help GPs identify more quickly when a child may have an allergy

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY: A mother who spent a year and a half being told that she was overreacting to her son's stomach complaints by her GP found a food intolerance testing kit to be invaluable in helping with her sons debilitating symptoms. Geraldine Cudworth said: "I was very annoyed and frustrated that the GPs at my surgery were not taking my son's symptoms seriously. It took 18 months to be referred to a consultant who diagnosed Perianal Crohn's but offered no further treatment because 'his symptoms were not severe enough'. I would recommend Cambridge Nutritional Sciences' tests to any mother whose child is suffering from similar unexplained symptoms."

Cambridge Nutritional Sciences (CNS), manufacturers of the Food Detective at-home testing kit and Food Print laboratory tests for food intolerance, concurs with the NICE's recommendations and recognises from customer feedback that very little support is offered by GPs with conditions such as food allergies and intolerance. CNS welcomes guidance that increases awareness of these complaints amongst doctors in order to treat children with intolerances and allergies to food as quickly as possible.

A food intolerance is different to a food allergy. An allergic response is often instantaneous, causing a reaction such as vomiting or diarrhoea. An intolerance can be much slower-acting and cause symptoms such as IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), migraines, bloating, eczema, lethargy and constipation. Symptoms can appear hours, or even days, after the problem food has been consumed, making diagnosis difficult through the use of a food diary or eliminating one food at a time from the patient's diet. Elimination diets were previously the only testing method for food intolerances, and the process can be tedious and long-winded.

Pending guidelines, issued by NICE in August 2010, state that GPs need to act much more quickly to common childhood complaints that could be triggered by diet. CNS agrees that it is critical that food allergies are diagnosed rapidly and effectively because often the reaction can be instantaneous and severe.

Testing for food allergies relies on an IgE response which can be diagnosed through a skin test carried out at your GP's surgery or a pin-prick blood test which measures IgE response in the blood.

IgG pin-prick blood tests, such as those carried out by CNS, are designed to identify food intolerances, not food allergies. The tests work by measuring food specific IgG reactions in the blood, which is recognised as the most reliable way to identify foods that may be causing symptoms of intolerance.

CNS offers a range of tests for food intolerance diagnosis, including the Food Detective at-home testing kit and Food Print laboratory tests which can identify up to 200+ foods in a single finger-prick blood sample. CNS advises all of its clients to seek nutritional advice before eliminating any foods from a diet, especially that of a child. CNS works in conjunction with a nationwide network of nutritionists who can be contacted through their advice line (01353 863 279), as well as working in conjunction with nationwide charity, Allergy UK.

The Food Detective test has been subjected to rigorous testing and is CE marked, meaning that it has been approved by stringent European Union standards; Food Print lab tests comply with international ISO quality standards. CNS's Managing Director, Geoff Gower says: "We recommend assessing a child's symptoms and if they are in-line with those of food intolerance, testing would be advisable. However, we do not recommend that our tests are used instead of NHS allergy tests because clearly it is essential to identify food allergies. We suggest food intolerance tests are used alongside these tests as allergy and intolerance can affect the child in different ways and it is important to look at both. However, it is imperative that parents seek nutritional advice from a trained and qualified advisor before eliminating any foods from a child's diet."

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