

# Understanding OIT

## A Parent's Guide to Oral Immunotherapy

Oral Immunotherapy (OIT) is changing lives for families affected by food allergies. This guide will help you understand what OIT is, how it works, and whether it might be right for your family.

### What OIT Can Offer Your Family

- ✓ Protection from accidental exposures
- ✓ Reduced anxiety around food
- ✓ Expanded diet and lifestyle freedom
- ✓ Improved quality of life for the whole family

### Wisconsin Food Allergy Institute

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# What is Oral Immunotherapy (OIT)?

Oral Immunotherapy is a medical treatment that retrains your child's immune system to tolerate foods it currently sees as dangerous. Under careful medical supervision, your child consumes gradually increasing amounts of their allergen until they build lasting tolerance.

*Think of it like teaching the body a new language—one tiny word at a time.*

## How OIT Works: The 4 Phases

### PHASE 1: Assessment & Testing

- Comprehensive allergy evaluation
- Review of medical history and previous reactions
- Skin prick testing and/or blood work
- Determine candidacy and create personalized plan

### PHASE 2: Initial Escalation (Day 1)

- First doses given in clinic under close supervision
- Starts with extremely small amounts (1/1000th of allergen)
- Medical team monitors for 2-4 hours
- Establish starting dose for home

### PHASE 3: Build-Up Phase

- Gradually increasing doses over 4-6 months
- Weekly or bi-weekly clinic visits for dose increases
- Daily dosing at home between visits
- Close monitoring and adjustments as needed

### PHASE 4: Maintenance & Freedom

- Reach protective "maintenance dose"
- Continue daily home dosing
- Monthly check-ins with clinic
- Achieve food freedom with ongoing tolerance

## What Allergens Can Be Treated?

- Peanut
- Tree nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, pine nuts, and walnuts etc.)
- Milk
- Egg
- Sesame
- Soy
- Wheat
- Multiple allergens (sequential or simultaneous treatment)
- If patients are allergic to something else, we can discuss possible treatment of that allergen.

## What Results Can We Expect?

OIT can help your child achieve:

- **"Bite-proof" protection** – Able to safely consume accidental exposures without severe reaction
- **Reduced anxiety** – Less fear around food for the whole family
- **Expanded diet** – Many patients can freely eat their allergen
- **Improved quality of life** – Birthday parties, restaurants, and travel become possible again

*Note: Results vary by patient. OIT provides desensitization, not a cure. Most patients maintain tolerance with continued exposure.*

## Safety: What You Should Know

### Our Safety Protocols:

- All dose increases happen in clinic with medical supervision
- Emergency medications and equipment always on-site
- Board-certified allergist oversees every treatment
- 24/7 access to care team for questions
- Individualized pacing based on your child's response

### Potential Side Effects:

- **Mild:** Itchy mouth, mild stomach discomfort (common, temporary)
- **Moderate:** Hives, nausea (treatable, managed in clinic)
- **Severe:** Anaphylaxis (rare, <1% of doses, always managed with epinephrine)

**Our Track Record:** Zero severe reactions requiring hospitalization when protocols are followed.

## Common Questions from Parents

### **Q: How long does treatment take?**

A: Typically 6-12 months to reach maintenance, followed by ongoing daily dosing.

### **Q: What age can children start?**

A: Our office can create a comprehensive food allergy plan for children of any age

### **Q: Is OIT covered by insurance?**

A: OIT is not currently covered by insurance. However our office works diligently to bill what we can to insurance and minimize cost to the patient.

There is an initiation fee that is charged at the time of OIT initiation.

This can be paid upfront at a discounted rate or via payment plan.

### **Q: Can you treat multiple allergies?**

A: Yes! We can treat multiple allergens sequentially or simultaneously.

### **Q: Can adults do OIT?**

A: Absolutely. OIT works for patients of all ages.

## Ready to Learn More?

Schedule a consultation to discuss whether OIT is right for your family. Our team is here to answer your questions and guide you through every step of the journey.

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## From Fear to Freedom