

## Medical Devices Information Notice

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### Food Intolerance Testing

**HPRA Information Notice: IN2015(2) Issue Date: 24 March 2015**

#### ISSUE

The HPRA would like to highlight an increasing number of food intolerance tests and services being made available in Ireland. These include testing services offered through nutritional and food intolerance centres, certain pharmacies, test kits for people to use in their own home and postal based services where people send blood specimens to a company's laboratory and receive a result through the post or through an online service.

The diagnosis of any condition relating to ability to digest or "tolerate" foods and the clinical significance of this should be made in careful consultation with your doctor and should not be based on the use of self testing alone and/or use of testing services that have not been recommended by your doctor.

Relying on such tests could lead you to restrict important food groups from your diet. This could lead to adverse health consequences and dietary deficiency, in particular in vulnerable groups such as children. In addition it could result in delay or failure to detect other important causes of your symptoms and has the potential for misdiagnosis. For this reason if you have any concerns in relation to your reactions to particular foods, you should discuss your symptoms with your doctor who will be fully aware of your health history and can advise on appropriate next steps.

It is important to be aware that a food allergy is a distinctly different condition. Food allergies can cause serious allergic reactions such as swelling and difficulty breathing.

**This information notice follows the publication in November 2014 of the [HPRA's consumer information leaflet](#) which advises caution when using self-test products. Our advice on using food intolerance tests should be read in conjunction with this.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

HPRA advice to consumers:

- 1 If you have a concern that you may not tolerate certain foods well or are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms, in particular after eating certain foods, visit your doctor who will take your medical history, examine you and guide you appropriately.
- 2 Exercise caution before using self-tests for food intolerance, commercial food intolerance services or entities offering diagnosis of food intolerance through postal or on-line services. Discuss any decision of this nature with your doctor prior to progressing.
- 3 If you have suffered an adverse effect as a result of food intolerance tests, please let us know by submitting a user report
- 4 For further information, see the HPRA's published consumer advice leaflet: [Self-test products](#)

## HPRA CONTACT INFORMATION

Health Products Regulatory Authority  
Kevin O'Malley House  
Earlsfort Centre  
Earlsfort Terrace  
Dublin 2

Telephone: +353-1-6764971  
Fax: +353-1-6344033  
E-mail: [devices@hpra.ie](mailto:devices@hpra.ie)  
Website: [www.hpra.ie](http://www.hpra.ie)