

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

(650) 343-4597 FAX (650) 343-3402

Newsletter

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Food Allergy Updates from the American College of Allergy, Allergy and Immunology (ACAAI)

Study shows 30% of moms got conflicting advice on eating the same food their infant is allergic to.

Many new mothers with infants want very much to breastfeed as it is the gold standard for early nutrition. What to do when you find out your young child has a food allergy, and you are breastfeeding? A [new study](#) in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, the scientific journal of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), found that more than 28% of the women were given no guidance on whether they could eat the same food their breastfeeding child was allergic to. “We found that guidance from healthcare practitioners for breastfeeding mothers in this situation was inconsistent,” says pediatrician and internist Hannah Wangberg, MD, ACAAI member and lead author of the study. “Of the 133 mothers who completed the survey, 47% were advised to continue breastfeeding without dietary restriction and 17% were advised to avoid eating the food(s) their child was allergic to while breastfeeding. A minority of the mothers (12%) reported their child experienced an allergic reaction to breast milk.”

When mothers in the survey were asked if they had received conflicting advice from their healthcare providers on what they should or should not eat while breastfeeding their food allergic child, more than 30% said they had received conflicting advice. The study authors point out that the survey did not specifically ask whether the child’s allergist or primary care provider gave the advice. The study also makes clear that no mothers were encouraged to stop breastfeeding entirely. According to allergist Jay Lieberman, MD, chair of the ACAAI Food Allergy Committee, “There is no uniform guidance I’m aware of on this topic, which is perhaps one reason for the confusion. That’s in part

because there is not a lot of good data available. That said, there is little evidence that if a mother eats a food that the child is allergic to, that this will lead to a reaction in the child.”

Dr. Lieberman says he tells breastfeeding mothers to continue breastfeeding and eating whatever they want. However, if they

feel more comfortable avoiding the child’s allergen, that’s fine as well, but to continue breastfeeding is ideal. For the 89% of mothers that continued to breastfeed after their child’s food allergy diagnosis, 46% continued to eat the food their child was allergic to on a regular basis (greater than once per week) and did not alter how they provided breast milk to their child. An additional 25% continued to eat the food their child was allergic to on an infrequent basis (less than once per week) without altering how they provided breast milk to their child.

Study shows children not introduced to egg at one year were more likely to have egg allergy at 6 years

– Allergists and pediatricians have recommended since 2017 that parents start to introduce peanut product around the time their child begins solid foods to prevent peanut allergy. A new study being presented at this year’s American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Annual Scientific Meeting reveals that early egg introduction is associated with decreased egg allergy. “We examined infant feeding and food allergy data from birth to 6 years, collected by 2237 parent surveys in the Infant Feeding Practices Study II conducted by the CDC and US-FDA,” said Allergy and Immunology Fellow Giulia Martone, MD, ACAAI member and lead author of the study. 1379 participants had complete food allergy data to 6 years. “We found that children who hadn’t had egg introduced by 12 months were more likely to have egg allergy at 6 years.”

14 of 2237 surveys (0.6%) reported egg allergy at one year and 11 of 1379 surveys (0.8%) reported egg allergy at 6 years. Children with egg allergy at 1 year-old and 6 years-old had less frequent egg consumption at 5, 6, 7 and 10 months of age.

“Egg allergy is the second most common food allergy throughout the world,” said Xiaozhong Wen, MD, PhD, senior author and principal Investigator of the study. “Current evidence suggests that early introduction of egg during infancy, followed by consistent and frequent feedings, seems protective against development of egg allergy. We are still investigating optimal timing of infant egg introduction and frequency of feeding.”

If you have questions about whether you or anyone in your family has a food allergy, please contact us so we can help make an accurate diagnosis and give you the recommendations you need to help keep you and your loved ones happy and healthy.