

Early introduction of allergenic foods reduces risk of food sensitization

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Allergenic foods like cow's milk products, if introduced to kids at early age, reduces risk of food sensitization. Credit: ATS

Children who had a diet that included cow's milk products, egg and

peanut before age one were less likely to develop sensitization to the corresponding foods, according to new research presented at the ATS 2016 International Conference. Early introduction of eggs appeared to be especially beneficial, as it decreased the risk of sensitization to any of the three tested foods.

The Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development (CHILD) Study, directed by Malcolm Sears, MB, ChB, professor in the Department of Medicine at McMaster University, is believed to be "the first to determine the effects of timing of food introduction to cow's [milk products](#), egg, and peanut, on food sensitization at age one in a general population-based cohort," said lead investigator Maxwell Tran, a research student at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Most previous studies focused on one specific food type, studied outcomes in later childhood or studied high-risk groups.

The study included data from 1,421 children. Most parents in the study introduced cow's milk products, which encompass cow's milk-based formula, to their infants before age one: 0-6 months 48 percent, 7-12 months 48 percent and ≥12 months 4 percent. The majority of parents, however, delayed introducing eggs to their children: 0-6 months 6 percent, 7-12 months 76 percent and ≥12 months 19 percent.

"The clinical implications of our findings are that early introduction of allergenic foods (egg, cow's milk products, and peanut) before age one should be encouraged and is better than food avoidance for reducing the risk of food [sensitization](#)," said Mr. Tran. "Sensitization is not the same as allergy, but it is an important step on the pathway."

The results of the CHILD study reinforce a shift in thinking from delayed food introduction to earlier food introduction for allergy prevention. "Many guidelines around the world are now reflecting this shift, with the recommendation of food introduction before 6 months of

age," said Mr. Tran.

This phase of the study involved one-year-old children. However, the CHILd study is well-positioned to investigate infant feeding practices in relation to allergic diseases up to [age](#) five and possibly beyond that.

More information: Abstract 8568: The Effects of Infant Feeding Practices on Food Sensitization in a Canadian Birth Cohort

Provided by American Thoracic Society

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