

HealthNuts Research Update 2011

We've recruited 5,000 babies!

Thank you for taking part in the HealthNuts study! HealthNuts is run by researchers at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute at The Royal Children's Hospital. Thanks to your participation, HealthNuts has now tested over 5,300 1 year olds for food allergy. With 73% of people asked deciding to participate in the project, and over 1,000 of these attending the Royal Children's Hospital for further allergy testing, we have received great feedback and amazing results.

What we already know:

- The incidence of food allergy is rising
- Up to 10% of infants in the study had challenge-proven food allergy
- Some children have worse reactions than others
- It is safe to introduce cooked egg into infants diet from around 4-6 months of age and may even protect against egg allergy

What we don't know:

- The main factors in driving food allergy
- Who is at greatest risk of having a food allergy
- Why the number of people with food allergies is increasing

We found that around one in ten babies had a food allergy, and often more than one. About 3% were allergic to peanut, 9% to egg and 1% to sesame.

Our study has challenged some of the ideas that people used to have about food allergy. In the past, some guidelines recommended that infants should not be given egg until after 10 months of age. We found that infants given cooked egg much earlier, at 4-6 months, were not more likely to have egg allergy. In fact, giving egg earlier might even protect infants from egg allergy, and more studies are underway to test this.

Because of our research and the findings of other research internationally, the advice to delay the introduction of egg has been removed from infant feeding guidelines in Australia.

Our research has been published in international journals, the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and the Journal of Clinical and Experimental Allergy.

Our next step is to find out how many children grow out of their food allergy. We also want to find out how many children with and without food allergy develop other allergies later in life. To do this, we will be contacting you again when your child turns 4 years old. Keep an eye out for a letter from us in the mail around your child's 4th birthday!

Thanks again for your contribution to the HealthNuts study.

HealthNuts...Nuts about Health!

website: mcri.edu.au/healthnuts

Please let us know if you have changed your contact details by emailing health.nuts@mcri.edu.au or contacting Kaye Trembath on ph (03)8341 6266