

# How prenatal diet, delivery mode and infant feeding relate to pediatric allergies

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Many pregnant women spend time before their baby arrives thinking about how they can prevent allergies in their child, especially if they themselves suffer from allergies or asthma. Two new studies being presented at the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Annual Scientific Meeting in Houston contain new information on how prenatal diet, the way the baby is delivered, and infant feeding practices can affect the risk of allergy.

## How a Baby is Delivered and How They Feed Can Affect Allergy Onset

The study examined medical charts of 158,422 children and identified children with 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 allergic conditions. The conditions identified were eczema, food allergy, asthma and [hay fever](#).

"We examined whether the children were delivered by vaginal delivery or C-section, and whether they were exclusively breastfed or had supplemental breastfeeding," says allergist David Hill, MD, Ph.D., ACAAI member and lead author of the study. "We found vaginal delivery was associated with a reduced rate of development of [allergic conditions](#). In addition, both exclusive breastfeeding and supplemental breastfeeding were associated with reduced development of allergies. While a mother can't always control the way her baby is delivered, exclusive or supplemental breastfeeding may be helpful in reducing the rate of onset and overall burden of allergies in children."

Presentation Title: Delivery Mode and Feeding Practices Influence Allergic Disease Burden  
Presenter: David Hill, MD, Ph.D.

## **Mother's Diet During Pregnancy and Allergy History Affect Offspring**

This Healthy Start study in Denver examined whether an association existed between how the mother ate during pregnancy, the mother's history of allergic disease and whether the child developed eczema and/or a food allergy.

"We surveyed 1,315 [pregnant women](#) and recorded their diet during pregnancy, as well as their history of allergies," says Carina Venter, Ph.D., RD, ACAAI member and lead author of the study. "We found that children of mothers with poor dietary diversity, along with a maternal history of allergic disease were more likely to develop eczema and/or food allergy. Of the mothers classified as having both poor dietary diversity and having a personal history of allergic disease, 33 percent of their children were diagnosed with eczema and/or food [allergy](#) by age 2 years. Of the remaining mothers who were classified as having either good dietary diversity, with or without a personal history of allergic disease, or as having poor dietary diversity with no personal history of allergic disease, 21 percent of their [children](#) were diagnosed with eczema and/or [food allergy](#) by age 2 years."

"Pregnant women—especially those with allergies—should be aware that their diet during pregnancy can affect their child's chances of developing [eczema](#) and/or [food](#) allergies" says allergist David Fleischer, MD, ACAAI member and co-author of the study.

Presentation Title: Maternal Diet During Pregnancy and Eczema and Food Allergy in Offspring: Healthy Start Study  
Presenter: Carina Venter, Ph.D., RD

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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