

# Preventing kids' food allergies starts in infancy

April 9 2019, by Len Canter , Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—It's a scary statistic: Every three minutes, an allergic

reaction to a food sends someone to the emergency department, according to the nonprofit group Food Allergy Research & Education.

Food allergies affect one in every 13 children under age 18. Eight foods account for the majority of all reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, [tree nuts](#), soy, wheat, fish and shellfish.

Science has found ways to help kids avoid allergies to eggs and peanuts, two of the most common of these food allergies. A research review published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that simply introducing eggs or peanuts to baby's diet after 4 months of age can lower the child's risk of developing an egg or [peanut allergy](#).

Recently released guidelines from the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases has more specific advice regarding peanuts based on a five-year study. That study involved more than 600 infants at high risk of developing the nut allergy, because they had severe eczema, an egg allergy or both. Half of the babies were given peanut-containing foods; half were not. Allergy risk was reduced by 81% in the group that ate the nuts, the study found.

These are the guidelines from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases:

- If baby has severe eczema, egg allergy or both, introduce peanut-containing foods as early as 4 to 6 months of age.
- If baby has mild to moderate eczema, consider introducing peanut-containing foods around 6 months of age.
- If baby has no eczema or food allergy, introduce peanut-containing foods with other solid foods when age-appropriate.

It's important to work with your pediatrician to assess your baby's allergy risk. If it's high, the doctor may want to do an allergy test *before* you introduce these foods.

**More information:** FoodSafety.gov has more on [food allergies](#).

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Citation: Preventing kids' food allergies starts in infancy (2019, April 9) retrieved 23 July 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-04-kids-food-allergies-infancy.html>

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