Early Peanut Introduction: Recent Findings, Latest Guidelines, Q&A

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Today’s Experts

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Both are members of NIAID Panel that developed the guidelines
2000: American Academy of Pediatrics
- High-risk children; delay peanut introduction until age 3

2008: Journal of Allergy & Clinical Immunology
- Peanut allergy 10x more common in British children than Israeli children of similar background
- Israeli children eat peanut snack during infancy.
2010: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Food Allergy in the United States released by National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)

- NIAID cites lack of evidence that delayed introduction prevents food allergy.
- Guidelines suggest that feeding of allergenic foods not be delayed beyond age 4 to 6 months.
Prevention studies are difficult to fund and take a long time to generate data.

However, only a prevention study could answer the questions around early feeding.

**2008:** *In partnership with the NIH, FARE chose to fund the LEAP Study with the aim of a definitive, evidence-based strategy to prevent peanut allergy.*
2015: New England Journal of Medicine publishes LEAP trial: *Prospective study of early peanut feeding*

- Study of infants at high risk for peanut allergy due to egg allergy and/or eczema
- Infants with clinical peanut allergy were excluded (study prevention, not treatment)
- Two groups: peanut avoiders vs. early and regular peanut consumers (starting in infancy)
By age 5:

- 3.2% of children who ate peanut early and regularly had peanut allergy
- 17.2% of children who avoided peanut had peanut allergy
- Eating peanut early and regularly reduced prevalence of peanut allergy by 81%
**2015: LEAP-On (Persistence of Oral Tolerance to Peanut)**

- Follow-up to LEAP
- Children who ate peanut regularly from infancy to age 5 retained protection against peanut allergy even after avoiding peanut from age 5 to 6.

**2015: EAT (Enquiring About Tolerance)**

- Two groups: infants fed allergenic foods early (before age 6 months) vs. infants exclusively breastfed
- Rates of food allergy not significantly different, so early introduction did not lead to food allergy development.
Based on LEAP and other studies, NIAID established a Coordinating Committee to oversee development of addendum to NIAID peanut introduction guidelines.

- 26 professional organizations, advocacy groups, and federal agencies represented

In June 2015, Coordinating Committee convenes 26-member Expert Panel to develop evidence-based consensus recommendations supplementing NIAID’s 2010 guidelines.

- Diverse clinical, scientific, and public health specialties, including patient advocacy
2017: NIAID releases Addendum Guidelines based on children’s risk of developing peanut allergy

- **High risk**: egg allergy, severe eczema, or both
- **Moderate risk**: mild to moderate eczema alone
- **Low risk**: neither food allergy nor eczema

- **IMPORTANT**: Peanuts and peanut butter are choking hazards for infants
  - The guidelines offer suggested safe forms of peanut; for example, pureed fruits or vegetables with 2 teaspoons of peanut powder
Guideline 1: Peanut Introduction for Infants at HIGH RISK

For Infants at High Risk

Introduce age-appropriate peanut foods at age 4 to 6 months to reduce risk of developing peanut allergy

- Introduce other solid foods first to ensure infant is developmentally ready.
- Allergy testing by a doctor is strongly advised prior to peanut introduction. Doctor may test blood for peanut-specific IgE, conduct skin prick test, or both.
- Test results will help doctor assess best setting to introduce peanut:
  - Home
  - Doctor’s office
  - Specialized facility (oral feeding challenge, in case infant is already allergic to peanut)
Guideline 2: Peanut Introduction for Infants at MODERATE RISK

For Infants at Moderate Risk

Introduce age-appropriate peanut foods around age 6 months to reduce risk of developing peanut allergy

- Other solid foods should be introduced first
- Feed peanut at home without prior evaluation at a doctor’s office
- If concerns exist, child can undergo medical evaluation and introduction to peanut by doctor
For Infants at Low Risk

Freely introduce age-appropriate peanut foods based on family preferences and cultural practices

- Introduction can be done at home.
- Early peanut introduction is expected to be safe, given safety of early introduction for children at higher peanut allergy risk.
- Early introduction in this group, though not emphasized in the guidelines, should contribute to lower overall rate of peanut allergy.
Addressing Myths and Misconceptions

- Intent of the guidelines
  - What children are targeted

- Why they are crucial to implement

- Misconceptions about the guidelines
  - Not intended for peanut allergic children
  - Not written to make parents feel guilty
  - Not “peanut industry inspired”
Questions
Thank you!