

Early Peanut Introduction in Babies: Caregiver FAQ

Can I use a pre-packaged allergen kit instead of feeding peanut butter to my baby?

-There are many popular products on the market that advertise early allergen introduction. They typically have starter products containing peanuts, milk, and egg. The packets geared toward older infants often include nine major allergens. Key Takeaways: 1) Caregivers can use these products; however, good anticipatory guidance is needed about quantities and frequency of ingestion. 2) Always remind caregivers NOT TO USE THE PACKETS if the baby has a KNOWN allergy to one of the allergens in the packets. 3) Using the packets for desensitization therapy for known allergies could be dangerous and lead to allergic reactions.

Someone else in our household is allergic to peanuts. Is it okay to introduce peanuts to my baby?

-Yes, with proper precautions for the allergic child. If offering the baby peanut-containing foods, place the child in the highchair for eating. Wipe surfaces or utensils with warm, soapy water.

-Right now, it's important to feed your baby peanut butter. Caregivers can try this when other children are at school or napping.

-If an allergic child touches peanut butter, they may have localized symptoms (hives, rash), but systemic allergic reactions and anaphylaxis occur due to

CONSUMPTION.

-If the caregiver needs additional support, consider offering two-bite feed introductions in the office for those with allergic family members. Caregivers must be educated to continue trying at home.

My baby is allergic to peanuts or we have a family history of allergies to nuts. Can we test for nut allergies in addition to peanuts?

-If testing before introduction makes the caregiver feel more comfortable, it can be an option. Remember that false positives can lead to unnecessary avoidance, and we try not to medicalize the introduction of foods.

-Additional testing may be a separate visit outside of the well child check and take a bit longer to get results. We can schedule a different visit to discuss this.

Isn't peanut butter still a choking hazard for babies?

-Yes! Mixing peanut butter with the suggested ingredients on the handout reduces the peanut butter's thickness, making it a safe way to offer peanut butter without concerns for choking.

In our family/culture, we do not typically consume peanut butter. Does my baby still need to consume peanut butter?

-Yes. Though your family may not offer peanut butter as a cultural norm, one of the safest ways for young children to eat peanut-containing foods is by thinning peanut butter (reference the handout with mixing directions). Whole nuts and nut fragments are choking hazards.

-Consistently offering your baby peanut butter during infancy and young childhood will allow them to consume other peanut products throughout their lives, as observed in various cultures.

What other peanut-containing foods are available besides peanut butter?

-Some babies enjoy eating peanut 'puffs.' These are available online and in stores. Please note that babies must consume about 15-20 puffs, depending on the brand, to meet the target of 2g of protein per serving. Peanut powder is commercially available, and caregivers can mix 2 teaspoons like peanut butter.

What kind of peanut butter should we purchase?

-We understand some peanut butter has sugar and other additives. It's not necessary to buy a specific type of peanut butter or high-end organic peanut butter. Try to buy peanut butter with as few ingredients as possible.

Does WIC cover peanut butter?

-WIC only covers peanut butter before age 1 if the baby is breastfeeding.

Is peanut allergy common or likely in my child's race/ethnicity?

-The rate of increase in self-reported food allergy is highest in Black children, followed by Hispanic children, and lowest in non-Hispanic white children. The prevalence of food allergy in children over the last 20 years is about 8%. (1 in 13 kids and 2 in every classroom are easily visualized statistics).

Can we just go to an allergist first?

-Our offices collaborate closely with our allergy colleagues. Referrals to allergists may delay the introduction of peanut-containing foods due to the wait time for new patient appointments. Delaying the introduction of peanuts can actually increase the risk of developing a peanut allergy. We're recommending introduction for your baby's diet because delays in peanut introduction can increase the risk of developing peanut allergy.