

UNC FOOD ALLERGY INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

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BACK TO SCHOOL

While we are thrilled that so many children will have the opportunity to return to school after a year of never ending Zoom classes, we understand that in-person learning environments can be stressful for our food allergy families. The most important aspect of any child attending school is his or her safety. As parents, we all do the best that we can to provide a safe environment for our food-allergic kids, but the single most important thing that we can do is to teach our kids to control what goes in their mouth and not share food.

Reminders for Return to the Classroom

- Check expiration dates on emergency epinephrine and ask your allergy provider for refills if needed. All children should have emergency epinephrine (Auvi-Q/EpiPen) at school.
- Make sure you have an updated Food Allergy Action Plan from your pediatrician or allergist. We really like this one from FARE: Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan | Food Allergy Research & Education (<https://www.foodallergy.org/living-food-allergies/food-allergy-essentials/food-allergy-anaphylaxis-emergency-care-plan>)
- Have a clear understanding of how mealtime runs at your child's school. Separate food allergy tables are NOT necessary, but good handwashing before and after meals as well as cleaning eating surfaces with warm soapy water decrease the risk of accidental cross-contamination.
- Talk to your child's teacher about different ways to have classroom celebrations besides 'party food.' Individualized goodie bags of trinkets, stickers, crayons, tattoos can be fun!

New Study

We have started recruiting for an exciting study, sponsored by Abbott Nutrition, for children ages 3 months to 12 years of age with cow's milk allergy. The study is titled: Determination of Hypoallergenicity of an Extensively Hydrolyzed Infant Formula in Infants and Children with Cow's Milk Allergy. The study is testing a hypoallergenic formula similar to Alimentum, but by modifying it with non-porcine enzymes, it allows the product to be Kosher. More information on this study can be found on our website.

Currently Recruiting Study

Omalizumab as Monotherapy and as Adjunct Therapy to Multi-Allergen OIT in Food Allergic Children and Adults (OUTMATCH)

The primary objective of this study is to determine if a study medication called omalizumab (Xoliar) alone or combined with oral immunotherapy may help people with multiple food allergies. Participants must have a peanut allergy and at least two other food allergies to milk, egg, wheat, cashew, hazelnut, or walnut.



DR. KIM HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO SERVE AS THE NEXT CHIEF FOR THE DIVISION OF ALLERGY AND IMMUNOLOGY AS OF JULY 2021.

Welcoming Dr. Corrine Keet to UNC!

The Pediatric Allergy and Immunology Division of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill welcomes Dr. Corinne Keet, M.D., Ph.D. as Professor of Pediatrics. At UNC, Dr. Keet will work closely with the Food Allergy Initiative and the Children's Research Institute to lead research into the causes and best approaches to prevent and manage food allergy and other allergic diseases. Dr. Keet will also serve as Vice Chair of Research (Clinical and Translational) in the Department of Pediatrics, helping to strengthen and grow research that promotes children's health.

Prior to joining UNC, Dr. Keet was on the faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine,

where she also completed Pediatric Residency and Fellowship in Allergy/Immunology. She is originally from California, where she completed her undergraduate work at the University of California, Berkeley, and medical school at the University of California, San Francisco.

Dr. Keet has led several large NIH-sponsored clinical studies about the management and prevention of food allergy and other allergies. She has published more than 80 papers on these topics. She is also on the Board of the American Board of Allergy and Immunology and is Associate Editor at the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.



Dr. Keet will see general pediatric allergy, asthma and immunology patients with a special clinical and research emphasis on food allergy and atopic dermatitis.

FOOD ALLERGY LAB UPDATES

Kulis Lab

The lab recently had an opinion article accepted at the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology discussing the airway as a potential route of sensitization. This builds on work from our group and others demonstrating that non-oral routes of exposure to food allergens may lead to sensitization and allergy. In particular, our group showed that house dust may promote the development of peanut-specific IgE in mice. We've begun to characterize the components within house dust that drive sensitization, and they seem to be bacterial components that interact with the immune system. Our findings may ultimately help in preventing food allergies. Authors on this paper from the UNC FAI include: Mike Kulis and Johanna Smeekens.



Iweala Lab

- Sosa Ebuomwan, one of our undergraduate research assistants, is now a UNC-Chapel Hill alumna. She graduated this past Spring (2021) from UNC-Chapel Hill and now works in information technology - Congratulations to her!
- We have a new undergraduate research assistant who'll be taking her place named Onyinyechukwu Mazi - she is a sophomore at UNC Chapel Hill. Welcome to Onyinyechukwu.
- Congratulations to Camille Kapita, Iweala Lab Manager, on his recent promotion to a Research Associate within the lab.
- Congratulations to our high school research assistant, Katerina Leedy on her First Place finish among High School Students at the Virginia Tech/ Dennis Dean Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship Conference that happened this past April 2021 and is sponsored by the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science. The title of her Project: Differential Expression of Innate Immune Response Genes in Individuals with and without Alpha-gal Syndrome*

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THAT BOTH DRs. EDWIN KIM AND CORRINE KEET WILL BEGIN SEEING PATIENTS IN OUR CHAPEL HILL CLINIC BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 2021!

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT, PLEASE CALL (919) 974-1401.

Commins Lab

Are alpha-gal-free meats "safe" for people allergic to alpha-gal?

While this answer would seem straightforward, there is certainly a risk that, like peanut, cow's milk and egg allergies, there are multiple different and distinct allergens in red meats to which patients might be allergic. Admittedly, we don't believe this is true but the experiment needs to be performed. Next up for the Commins lab is food challenges with alpha-gal-free bacon in study subjects who have a history of allergic reactions to pork.