

Our research explained

## BRCsnapshots

### Preventing peanut allergy in children



#### What we know

For many years health experts have recommended that infants are not fed foods containing peanuts, due to the risk of developing peanut allergy. Peanut allergy develops early in life, can be life threatening, is rarely outgrown and there is currently no cure.

Peanut allergy imposes a considerable burden, impacting on quality of life for patients and their families.



Peanut allergy now affects up to 1 in 50 school age children in the UK



It affects between 1-3% of children in Western Europe, the USA and Australia.



Peanut allergy has more than doubled in the last 20 years in the UK and North America

#### The LEAP study

The LEAP (Learning Early About Peanut Allergy) study enrolled 640 children aged from four to 11 months from Evelina London Children's Hospital, who were considered at high risk of developing peanut allergy due to pre-existing severe eczema and / or egg allergy.

In this randomised study, parents and carers of half of the children taking part were asked to feed peanut containing foods three times or more each week. The other half were asked to avoid providing children with foods containing peanuts until they reached the age of five. The study team followed up regularly with participants', families and carers to make sure they were sticking to their schedules.

## What we found

The study found that early introduction of peanut into the diet of high-risk infants significantly protected them against developing peanut allergy, and that avoidance could lead to peanut allergy.

The study also found that peanuts can be safely eaten by children under age 5.

17.2% of the children who avoided peanut developed peanut allergy by age five compared to 3.2% of the children who consumed peanuts. This represents an 81% protection against peanut allergy.

## How will this change care?

*“This is an important development and changed the way we think about preventing food allergy.*

*Since it was published, our study has changed guidelines on dietary advice given to parents across the world.”*

Professor Gideon Lack, Head of Paediatric Allergy, King’s College London and Head of Children’s Allergy Clinical Academic Group, KHP Institute of Women and Children’s Health at Evelina London.



### About the study

The study was supported by the NIHR Guy’s and St Thomas’ Biomedical Research Centre and the Immune Tolerance Network.

### Further information

Please contact Professor Gideon Lack, Head of Paediatric Allergy.

[gideon.lack@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:gideon.lack@gstt.nhs.uk)

<http://www.leapstudy.co.uk/>

### Links to external content

Link to journal article Randomized Trial of Peanut Consumption in Infants at Risk for Peanut Allergy

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1414850>

### Patient and Public Advisory Group (PPIAG)

This research snapshot has been put together with support of the Patient and Public Advisory Group. To find out more about how you can work with us to improve healthcare through research contact [brcppi@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:brcppi@gstt.nhs.uk)



### About our NIHR Guy’s and St Thomas’ Biomedical Research Centre

Our NIHR Biomedical Research Centre is a partnership between Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust and King’s College London. We work to develop and deliver new medicines and diagnostics to patients. We drive research and innovation into the NHS to provide maximum impact to our patients.

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