

Research: Parents Panic More About Milk, Egg Allergies Than Peanut

American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. (June 26, 2014) – It's tough being the parent of a child with food allergies. Constant vigilance is needed for everything your child eats, when a single food item containing a hidden ingredient can be fatal. Although worry is a factor for anyone caring for a child with food allergies, according to a study published in the July issue of *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, the scientific publication of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), there is increased anxiety and strain for caregivers of children allergic to milk and eggs.

The study examined 305 caregivers of children allergic to milk, egg, peanut or tree nut — the 4 most common food allergies. The caregivers were asked about details of the children's most severe food reaction, as well as information about the caregiver's quality of life. Researchers found caregivers who understood their child's reaction to offending foods had a higher quality of life. If they knew exactly what foods could give their child an allergic reaction, they were less likely to be anxious and stressed.

The authors were surprised to learn that milk and egg allergies were the most worrisome for caregivers.

"It's assumed peanut and tree allergies are the most severe, and therefore it may be presumed they would cause the most strain for caregivers" said allergist Laura Howe, MD, lead study author and ACAAI member. "But because eggs and milk are everywhere, and used to prepare so many dishes, caregivers with children allergic to those two ingredients feel more worried and anxious."

Only 64 percent of caregivers accurately perceived the severity of their child's reaction. More than 15 percent over-perceived their child's reaction severity and 19 percent under-perceived the reaction severity. Caregivers had significant concerns regarding their ability to help in the event of a reaction, and also that others wouldn't understand the seriousness of their child's food allergy.

"It is important for those who care for food-allergic children to work with an allergist to determine exactly what foods their child is allergic to, and how to respond in an emergency situation," said allergist Michael Foggs, MD, ACAAI president. "Parents need to have a clear plan of action in case their child eats a food they shouldn't. Children with a history of allergic reactions, and their caregivers, need to know how to administer epinephrine. Having plans in place can ease a parent's worries."

About ACAAI

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The ACAAI is a professional medical organization of more than 6,000 allergists-immunologists and allied health professionals, headquartered in Arlington Heights, Ill. The College fosters a culture of collaboration and congeniality in which its members work together and with others toward the common goals of patient care, education, advocacy and research. ACAAI allergists are board-certified physicians trained to diagnose allergies and asthma, administer immunotherapy, and provide patients with the best treatment outcomes. For more information and to find relief, visit <http://www.AllergyandAsthmaRelief.org> [1]. Join us on Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter.

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