

Development of Allergy in Infancy

1. At the present time there is a lack of evidence that dietary restriction during pregnancy and breastfeeding prevents allergic diseases such as asthma, allergic rhinitis, eczema, and food allergy in infants.
2. For infants at risk of developing allergic diseases (infants with at least one first-degree relative with allergic disease) there is little evidence that exclusive breastfeeding compared with feeding milk or soy based formula decreases the incidence of eczema.
3. There is evidence that exclusive breastfeeding for at least 3 months protects against wheezing in early life, however there is no good evidence that breast feeding protects against the development of asthma beyond 6 years of age.
4. In studies of infants at risk of developing allergic disease, who are not being breastfed, there is evidence that eczema may be prevented by the use of hydrolyzed formulas such as Nutramigen or Alimentum. More research is needed to determine whether these benefits extend into late childhood and adolescence.
5. There is no convincing evidence for the use of soy-based formula (as opposed to milk based formula) for the purpose of allergy prevention.
6. Although solid foods should not be introduced before 4 to 6 months of age, there is no evidence that delaying their introduction beyond this period has a protective effect on the development of allergic diseases. This includes delaying the introduction of foods that are considered to be highly allergic, such as fish, nuts, and eggs.

Reference; Greer FR, Sicherer SH, Burks AW, et al. *Pediatr* 2008; 121:183-191.