

Study challenges baby formula claim

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Despite the formula being recommended in public health guidelines set out by the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, the new study, published online in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, found there was no benefit in using hypoallergenic (partially hydrolysed whey) formula to prevent allergies in high-risk infants up to seven years of age, compared to a conventional cow's milk based formula.

The trial, which is one the largest to test the effect of hypoallergenic [baby formula](#), involved 620 infants and assessed whether using the formula decreased the risk of allergy in later life.

Infants in the study were given either hypoallergenic, cow's milk or soy formula after the cessation of breastfeeding. Allergy testing was undertaken at six, 12 and 24 months and children were followed up again at six or seven years of age.

Lead authors David Hill, a Senior Consultant Allergist at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and Adrian Lowe, a research fellow at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and the Centre for MEGA Epidemiology, the University of Melbourne said their findings did not support the recommendations that hypoallergenic formula should be used after breast feeding as a preventive strategy for infants at high risk of allergenic disease.

"In our study of high risk children, this 'hypoallergenic' formula did not show any beneficial effect, when compared with a normal cows' milk

based formula, for the prevention [childhood eczema](#), asthma or [hay fever](#) up to seven years of age," Dr Lowe said.

Dr Hill said: "Our findings do not support the role of hypoallergenic formula for the prevention of allergic disease. Families at high risk of allergy should continue to be encouraged to breast feed for the many known benefits associated with breastfeeding."

Provided by University of Melbourne

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