

# It's mom who sees troubles for teens with food allergies

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Teens with food allergies are more likely to have depression, anxiety or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)—and it's mom that notices it.

A McMaster University-led study has found that the mothers of [teens](#) with food allergies are more likely than the kids themselves to report that the youth have emotional and behavioural problems.

Following 1,300 children involved in an Australian study, the researchers found that at 14 years old, about a third of teens with food allergies reported they had emotional and behavioural problems, but more than 46 per cent of their moms reported those problems. These were depression, anxiety or ADHD rather than defiance or misbehaviour.

When the same teens were 21 years old, 44 per cent of those with food allergy reported emotional and behavioural problems, and they were twice as likely as their non-allergic peers to have symptoms of depression that had persisted from adolescence.

The study has been published online by the medical journal *Allergy*.

"Unfortunately, we don't know whether the teens with [food allergy](#) are less likely to report problems themselves, or whether the mothers are over-reporting problems, but we do know that health professionals should take in several people's perspectives when they are assessing these kinds of mental health problems," said Mark Ferro, principal

investigator of the study.

Ferro is an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioural neurosciences and pediatrics at McMaster's Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. He is also a member of the Offord Centre for Child Studies.

"It's also clear that these problems are not just a phase ? teens with food allergies are more likely to have mental health problems into adulthood," he added.

**More information:** *Allergy*, [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10 ...  
1/all.12829/abstract](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/all.12829/abstract)

Provided by McMaster University

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