

Milk allergy affects half of U.S. food-allergic kids under age one

November 16 2018

Although parents often focus on peanuts as the food allergy they need to worry about most, cow's milk is the most common food allergy in children under the age of 5. New research being presented at the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Annual Scientific Meeting found that over two percent of all U.S. children under the age of 5 have a milk allergy, and 53 percent of food-allergic infants under age 1 have a cow's milk allergy.

"Children in the U.S. spend their early years drinking [milk](#), so it's important to know that many of them—at least in the first few years—may be allergic," says Christopher Warren, Ph.D.(c), lead author of the study. "Our findings suggest that while [milk allergy](#) is relatively common during infancy, many children are likely to outgrow their milk allergies. We observed that while an estimated 53 percent of food-allergic infants under age 1 have a milk allergy, the number drops to 41 percent of 1-2-year-olds, 34 percent of 3-5-year-olds and 15% of 11-17-year olds."

The study surveyed more than 53,000 [parents](#) in households with children across the U.S. The survey was done over a one-year period from October 2015 to September 2016.

"We know confusion exists over what a real milk allergy looks like," says Ruchi Gupta, MD, ACAAI member and study author. "A child may have a milk intolerance that his parents mistake for a milk allergy. It's important that any child suspected of having a milk allergy have the

allergy confirmed with an allergist. A [food allergy](#) of any kind can have a big effect on a household, including food costs and quality of life. A child with a milk allergy should receive counseling on how to avoid milk, but also on what it means to unnecessarily cut out foods. You don't want to get rid of necessary nutrients."

According to the study, only 26 percent of milk-allergic [children](#) in the US have a current epinephrine auto-injector prescription—the lowest reported rate among the top nine food allergies. "Parents need to make sure they have an epinephrine auto-injector available and should talk to their [child](#)'s allergist if they have any questions," says Dr. Gupta. Allergists are trained to help you live the life you want by working with you to treat allergic diseases and avoid severe reactions.

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

Citation: Milk allergy affects half of U.S. food-allergic kids under age one (2018, November 16)
retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-11-allergy-affects-food-allergic-kids-age.html>

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