

# Electronic medical record alert found effective for reducing food allergy panel testing

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An electronic medical record (EMR) alert is effective for reducing food allergy panel ordering among pediatric and adult patients, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, held from Feb. 24 to 27 in San Antonio.

Jenika Ferretti-Gallon, M.D., from the University of California Davis Medical Center, and colleagues conducted a quality improvement project involving an EMR [intervention](#) consisting of a hard-stop alert with food allergy order placement and recommendation of targeted testing instead. The intervention was implemented in February 2021, and its effectiveness was examined by reviewing pediatric and [adult patients](#) for whom food allergy panels were ordered in the 12 months before and after the intervention.

Three hundred eighteen charts were reviewed. The researchers found that 98 food allergy panels were ordered in the year postintervention, representing a 55 percent reduction from the previous year. Per month,  $18.3 \pm 7.2$  food panels were ordered preintervention compared with  $8.1 \pm 1.8$  postintervention. Overall, 7.9 percent of patients had symptoms consistent with immunoglobulin E-mediated food allergy. Chronic abdominal pain and recurrent rash were the most common presenting symptoms (37.4 and 22.3 percent, respectively). Of those with positive tests, 42.2 and 49 percent were instructed to eliminate food from their diet and were given no clear dietary instructions, respectively.

"We hope these results will demonstrate that food allergy panels are being overused and can actually cause patient harm," Ferretti-Gallon said in a statement. "Proper food [allergy](#) diagnosis is essential for our patients' physical and mental well-being."

**More information:** [Press Release](#)  
[Annual Meeting](#)

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