

Food allergies tied to impaired growth in kids

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Early study suggests that avoiding allergy triggers might be a factor.

(HealthDay)—Food allergies appear to affect children's growth, a new study suggests.

This could be due to the fact that the treatment for food allergies is strict avoidance of foods that trigger a reaction, the researchers said.

The study of 245 children with food allergies found that they were smaller than other children. It also found that children with more than two food allergies were smaller than those with one or two food allergies.

The investigators looked at the [body mass index](#) (BMI)—a measurement that takes height and weight into account—of food-[allergic children](#) and compared it to BMIs of both healthy children and those with two other conditions known to affect growth.

"A greater number of food allergies translates into a greater number of dietary restrictions," study author Dr. Brian Vickery, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said in an American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) news release.

He and his colleagues also found that children with a milk allergy were smaller than those with other types of food allergies.

The study was scheduled for presentation Sunday at the annual meeting of the AAAAI in San Antonio, Texas. The data and conclusions of research presented at medical meetings should be viewed as preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

"The relationships uncovered between food-allergic children, particularly those with more than two and those suffering from [milk allergy](#), and the examined growth markers stress the need for nutritional assessment and intervention to ensure that food allergies do not contribute to any growth delay," AAAAI president and study author Dr. A. Wesley Burks said in the news release.

While the study found a connection between food allergies and lower BMI in [children](#), it did not establish a cause-and-effect relationship.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [food allergies](#).

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