

# Increase in number of patients being treated for alpha-gal

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(HealthDay)—There has been an increase in the number of patients

being treated for Galactose-alpha-1,3-galactose (alpha-gal) syndrome, according to a report from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Asthma, Sinus and Allergy Program (ASAP).

The number of patients diagnosed and treated for alpha-gal was minimal five years ago. At ASAP, allergists have diagnosed and are currently treating 160 patients with alpha-gal [syndrome](#). The increase is attributed to improved understanding of presentation of alpha-gal and improved [diagnostic testing](#).

First reports of delayed anaphylaxis from eating [red meat](#) were described in 2009. By 2012, thousands of cases were reported across large areas of the southern and eastern United States. Alpha-gal can be treated, with allergists recommending strict avoidance of cow, pork, and lamb; some patients also need to avoid mammalian organs and possibly even milk. Prevention of alpha-gal syndrome can likely be achieved by avoiding being bitten by ticks. Tips for avoiding ticks include walking in the center of trails, avoiding wooded or overgrown areas, use of Permethrin-treated boots and clothing during camping or hunting trips, and use of DEET-containing insect repellants.

"More doctors are becoming aware of this syndrome and once identified, more tests have become commercially available for allergist to order for their [patients](#)," Andrew S. Nickels, M.D., assistant professor of Medicine and Pediatrics and an allergist from ASAP, said in a statement.

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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