Early Life Secondhand Smoke Exposure May Have an Effect on Food Allergy Development

*Infants with smoking parents are more at risk for egg and peanut allergies in adolescence than infants with non-smoking parents according to research presented at the 2017 AAAAI Annual Meeting.*

Atlanta, GA (PRWEB) March 13, 2017 -- Secondhand smoke exposure is a well-established risk factor for asthma, but it may also have surprising effects in the development of diseases outside of the respiratory system. In the first study of its kind, researchers in Sweden investigated the link between early life secondhand smoke exposure and pediatric food-related symptoms.

The findings were presented at the 2017 American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) Annual Meeting in the abstract “Secondhand Smoke Exposure in Early Life and Food-Related Symptoms through Adolescence: Population-Based Prospective Cohort Study.”

The study followed 3,764 children born in Stockholm between 1994 and 1996 until they were 16 years old. Parents were surveyed when the children were 1, 2, 4, 8, 12, and 16 years-old to determine if the children showed any allergy-like symptoms to specific foods. When the children turned 4, 8, and 16, they were also tested for immunoglobulin E (IgE) reactivity to certain food allergens. IgE is an antibody associated with allergic reactions and can be used to help healthcare professionals decide if a person has a specific allergy.

The researchers then looked at the parents’ reported smoking. They defined early life secondhand smoke exposure as having a parent report they smoked when their child was about two months old.

The researchers found that infants who were exposed to secondhand smoke in early life were more likely to develop food-related symptoms in childhood. Secondhand smoke significantly increased the odds of IgE-associated symptoms to egg and peanut, which likely reflects a clinical food allergy.

“Early life exposure to secondhand smoke is a well-established risk factor for asthma and, in some studies, for allergic sensitization and eczema in children; however, no studies have prospectively looked at its impact on the risk of pediatric food-related symptoms,” said Anna Bergström, PhD. “Our research suggests that it does have an impact on the odds of children developing IgE-associated symptoms to certain foods.”

Research presented at the AAAAI Annual Meeting is published in an online supplement to The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) represents allergists, asthma specialists, clinical immunologists, allied health professionals and others with a special interest in the research and treatment of allergic and immunologic diseases. Established in 1943, the AAAAI has more than 6,900 members in the United States, Canada and 72 other countries. The AAAAI’s Find an Allergist/Immunologist service is a trusted resource to help you find a specialist.

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