

Prevention of Food Allergy: From Preconception to Early Post-Natal Life

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Objectives

1. Understand the concept that allergy is a response of the immune system in which the cytokines associated with the Th2 subtype of T helper cell (CD4+) predominate
2. Appreciate that food allergy is independent of the asthma/eczema/atopic rhinitis diathesis, but may contribute to these conditions, as well as being responsible for symptoms in other organ systems
3. Realize that predominance of the Th2 response may start *in utero*, but is more likely to be expressed as allergy in the offspring of atopic mothers than babies born of non-atopic mothers, regardless of the paternal history of allergy
4. Be in a position to apply the scientific data in practice by identifying high, moderate and low risk-for-allergy pregnancies, and implement dietary strategies to minimize the clinical expression of food allergy in the early life stages
5. Be alert to evolving research that suggests that increased risk for food allergy may be associated with:
 - a. Early supplementation with vitamins, especially vitamin D
 - b. High levels of omega-3 lipids in maternal colostrum and breast milk, and in the young infant
6. Recognize that maturation of the immune system to the Th1 response may be influenced by the microorganisms colonizing the bowel, and understand the role that probiotics may play in establishing a benign microflora