

Research may lead to peanut allergy cure

Instead of giggling and getting some of the gooey stuff smeared on his cheeks, Alexander's face swelled, and his mother rushed him to the hospital. According to The New York Times, millions of Americans suffer from the same condition that caused the reaction: an allergy to peanuts.

Dr. Wesley Burks, chief of the division of allergy and immunology in the department of pediatrics at Duke University Medical Center, presented the results of two studies last week.

"It gives us hope that in the next few years we will have a treatment," Burks said.

Collaboration between Duke and Arkansas Children's Hospital has revealed that peanuts themselves might be the antidote.

In the first study, 29 children with severe peanut allergies participated. Nine of them were given the treatment -a regulated daily dose of peanut for two and a half years. Of those nine children, five were able to complete a "peanut challenge." They were able to chew, swallow and digest peanuts without an adverse reaction-their allergies seemed to be cured.

The second study used 18 children, placing six of them on a placebo and 12 on the treatment. The placebo group was able to consume a peanut and a half before they reacted to it, but the experimental group was able to eat 15 peanuts before their bodies responded.

But parents should not begin feeding their children peanuts if they display symptoms, Burks warned. These preliminary studies, though they indicated promising results, are an early step in the research on this treatment.

"It is still an investigational study," Burks said. "It is not something to try at home or in a medical practice. The best treatment right now is appropriate diagnosis and avoidance."

Still, this is good news to some Duke students who have the condition.

"It's pretty exciting that they have some solid evidence now," Alexander said. "Hopefully we'll find a cure in my lifetime."

What I find interesting is that like a lot of allergies they're finding that by exposing a person to low doses we build up a tolerance. It's the same as people that have allergies to pets, many can build up immunities to their particular pet.

About the Author

Peanut - allergy - symptoms .com - Quantcast Audience Profile

Journal of Clinical Investigation -- Peanut allergy : a growing

Tree Nut Allergy - Tree Nut Allergies - Information on Tree Nut

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Food Allergy Symptoms , Living with Food Allergies

Nut allergy - information, symptoms and treatment

Common Peanut Allergy in Children

Nut allergy - The Basics

Frequently Asked Questions

Peanut Allergy : A Guide for Teens

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