

Preventing Food Allergies in Babies: A Practical Guide for Parents

Written by Professor Helen Brough, Consultant in Paediatric Allergy

Introduction

Food allergies are increasingly common in children, but many cases can be prevented with early, techniques based on evidence. This guide focuses on 4 important factors during a baby's first year of life which can help parents reduce the risk of food allergy in their baby.

01.



Manage Eczema Early

What to do:

- Use a daily moisturiser as soon as there's any sign of dry skin or eczema.
- Never dip hands into ointment pots.
- Use a spoon or spatula to avoid bacteria.
- Treat flare-ups quickly with appropriate creams prescribed by your doctor.
- Avoid nut oil-based skincare products.

Tip: Moisturise early to help reduce the risk of allergies and remember to always wash hands before moisturising.

02.

Prevent Sensitisation Through the Skin



Broken skin allows allergens to enter a baby's body and can trigger allergic responses.

What to do:

- Wash hands before touching baby and after handling food.
- Avoid food coming into contact with broken or inflamed skin.
- Choose skincare products with NO food ingredients.

Tip: A baby's skin is not a safe place to 'test' foods before eating.

03.

Support a Healthy Gut Microbiome

A healthy gut helps train the immune system and may reduce allergy risk.

What to do:

- Eat a fibre-rich, varied diet during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Introduce a wide range of vegetables, grains, pulses as well as proteins to babies.
- Limit unnecessary antibiotics in early life.

Tip: A 'rainbow diet' includes lots of colours of veggies and fruits, boosting the immune system.



04.

Introduce Allergens Early and Often

Delaying food allergens can increase the risk of allergy.

What to do:

- For babies with eczema, introduce smooth diluted peanut butter and puréed egg from 17 weeks of age, when a baby is ready for food.
- For babies without eczema, introduce these at around 6 months.
- Introduce allergens one at a time. There's no need to wait several days between introductions.
- Try a little at first, then give more each time.
- Feed allergens with a spoon to help prevent skin contact.
- Keep baby clothed during feeds.
- Once introduced, offer the food regularly (several times each week).
- Offer allergens as thin purees mixed with vegetables.



Tip: Giving a food once and then stopping may increase allergy risk.

Summary

Start early, go gently, and stay consistent. Protect your baby's skin, support their gut, and introduce foods the right way. Book an appointment for you or a family member or subscribe **@childrensallergydoctors** for more advice on managing food allergy, eczema, asthma and hay fever.

This guide is educational and does not replace medical advice. Speak to a paediatric allergy specialist before introducing allergens if your child has severe eczema or food allergy.



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