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Description

According to a 2015 study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine, exposing at-risk infants to a peanut derivative, such as peanut butter, can lessen their chance of developing a peanut allergy.

Keywords

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Citation

MLA
Transcript
2015 Study- Early Peanut Exposure May Alleviate Allergy

MATT LAUER, anchor:
Some new research could be a game changer when it comes to children and peanut allergies. The finding suggests exposing infants to peanuts before the age of one can actually help prevent the sometimes life-threatening condition. Doctor Natalie Azar is an NBC News medical contributor. Doctor, good to see--
goodyou.

DR. NATALIE AZAR, reporting:
Hi!

LAUER: Good morning.

DR. AZAR: Good morning, Matt.

LAUER: So a lot of parents probably just stopped what they were doing to listen to this--

DR. AZAR: Yes.

LAUER: --because there are a lot of kids with peanut allergies.

DR. AZAR: Yeah.

LAUER: Why expose these at-risk infants so early?

DR. AZAR: Well, you know, the long-term impact of peanut allergy can be quite significant. First of all, they develop very, very early. Children tend to not outgrow them. There's no cure and also there is a significant burden to the healthcare system with doctors' visits, emergency room visits, drug cost, not to men-- mention the psychological impact.

LAUER: So we're-- we're not talking about exposing these infants to peanuts themselves,--

DR. AZAR: Absolutely not.

LAUER: --we're talking about products that contain some of peanut derivative?

DR. AZAR: Correct. And that's really important take home point obviously. These-- the-- the study actually looked at infants between the ages of four and 11 months. We would never recommend to give a whole peanut to those kids because of the choking hazard. But peanut butter mixed with banana etcetera to soften it up is what they used in the study.

LAUER: But you still don't want certain children to be exposed to peanut products. Who is most at risk?
DR. AZAR: The highest risk group we believe are children with eczema, kids also with a cow's milk allergy, egg allergy, and also a family history of peanut allergy. That's a very significant risk.

LAUER: I think it's important just to remind parents--

DR. AZAR: Yes.

LAUER: --what the symptoms are and how you might know if your child has a peanut allergy.

DR. AZAR: Correct, Matt. And so what we-- typically it's an allergic reaction, so an itchy rash, hives, some of them may have nasal congestion, some nausea, obviously if they have tingling around the mouth, any shortness of breath or anything like that that could be a much more severe reaction, obviously would warrants intervention much sooner.

LAUER: All right. But, again, the headline here, perhaps expose these young children in infancy to peanut products?

DR. AZAR: Correct.

LAUER: All right. Doctor, thank you very much.

DR. AZAR: Thank you, Matt.

LAUER: Appreciate it.