

MEETING NEWS



Many food allergic adults develop a new food allergy in adulthood

November 8, 2017



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BOSTON — Approximately half of 40,447 food-allergic adults reported one or more adult-onset food allergies, according to findings presented at the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Annual Scientific Meeting.

“Food allergies are often seen as a condition that begins in childhood, so the idea that 45% of adults with food allergies develop them in adulthood is surprising,” lead author **Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH**, associate professor of pediatrics and medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine in Northwestern University, said in a press release. “We also saw that, as with children, the incidence of food allergies in adults is rising across all ethnic groups.”

To determine the prevalence of food allergy among adults, researchers analyzed cross-sectional survey data collected from 40,477 nationally representative U.S. adults between October 2015 and September 2016. They differentiated food allergic respondents from those with similar conditions, and calculated weighted proportions to estimate prevalence.

Gupta and colleagues found that approximately half of those surveyed who had a food allergy developed a new food allergy in adulthood. The most common new food allergies included shellfish (3.9%), peanut (2.4%), tree nut (1.9%) and finfish (1.1%). The risk for developing a food allergy to shellfish and peanuts was higher among black, Asian and Hispanic adults than among white adults, according to the press release. The data also suggest that prevalence of shellfish and nut allergies among adults are comparable to those among children.

“Many adults felt they had a food allergy that was actually an intolerance or oral allergy syndrome which are both treatable and not as severe. It is critical to discuss any adverse reactions to food with patients and work to really

determine if it is a true food allergy or something else with your referring allergist,” Gupta told *Healio Internal Medicine*. “Alongside questions about medication allergies, physicians should ask their adult and pediatric patients about whether they have experienced any adverse reactions to foods and carry out the recommended testing and/or allergist referral.” – by *Savannah Demko*

References:

Gupta R, et al. Abstract OR077. Presented at: ACAAI Annual Scientific Meeting; Oct. 26-30, 2017; Boston.

Disclosures: Gupta reports no relevant financial disclosures.