

## Food Allergies Commonly Misdiagnosed

---

MARCH 16, 2009

DENVER — Food allergies can be difficult to accurately diagnose, and reliance on a single test commonly results in misdiagnosis. David Fleischer, MD, and his colleagues at National Jewish Health found that eczema patients were especially prone to misdiagnosis of food allergies. Instead of relying solely on blood tests, the researchers conducted comprehensive evaluations of children referred to National Jewish Health, including blood tests, skin tests, medical history and oral food challenges, the gold standard of food-allergy diagnosis.

The 125 children evaluated were able to safely consume 508 of the suspected 917 allergenic foods by the end of their stay at National Jewish Health; more than half the foods eliminated from the patients' diets had been done so unnecessarily. That can be a costly and very inconvenient misdiagnosis for the families. While the misdiagnosed food allergies are most common among eczema patients, Dr. Fleischer says over reliance on simple screening tests leads to over-diagnosis of food allergy among a wider population as well.

**National Jewish Health** is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 121 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the media resources page.

### Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

**William Allstetter**  
303.398.1002  
allstetterw@njhealth.org

**Adam Dormuth**  
303.398.1082  
dormutha@njhealth.org