

New Study Looks to Prevent Progression of Eczema and Allergies in Infants

JULY 22, 2021

DENVER — Researchers at National Jewish Health have [launched a study](#) to examine if treating dry skin in infants can stop the progression of food allergies and eczema. The Stopping Eczema and Allergy (SEAL) study is hoping to halt these allergic diseases from progressing by using skin creams as a way to repair the skin before there is further damage. National Jewish Health is one of three sites in the nation participating in the clinical trial along with University of Chicago and Stanford Medicine.



In the United States, eczema affects over 9 million children, and food allergy affects 1 in 13 kids (about two per classroom). Infants who develop eczema are more likely to develop food allergies, hay fever and asthma as they grow older, a progression known as the atopic march. Researchers at National Jewish Health have previously identified itching and dry cracked skin of eczema patients as a significant promoter of the atopic march.

“Dry skin is very common among babies born in Colorado, and we also know that breaks in the skin lead to eczema and food allergy,” said Jessica Hui, MD, pediatric allergist and researcher at National Jewish Health *for Kids*. “We hope to find that by treating dry skin and eczema early, we can reduce the severity of eczema in early infancy and thereby prevent food allergy.”

The SEAL study is randomized and designed for children who have developed dry skin by 10 weeks of age, per parent or physician report. Researchers will compare the effect of different skin creams and regimens. Allergy evaluation, such as testing for common foods and environmental allergens, will be performed under the care and guidance of an allergy physician.

When patients with eczema scratch dry, itchy skin, it can further damage the skin barrier and activate the immune system. Increasing evidence indicates that food particles entering the body through cracks in the skin can trigger an allergic response that leads to food allergy. Once that allergic response has been triggered, the immune system is primed to develop not only eczema and food allergies, but also hay fever and asthma.

Participants will meet with an allergist regularly during the course of the trial and will be compensated for their time. The SEAL study will last for three years. For more information on the trial, contact Shirley Palombi at 303.398.1409 or Palombis@njhealth.org.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 122 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](#).

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