



# Infants & Peanut Proteins

Peanut allergies, which can cause negative reactions ranging from hives to anaphylactic shock (a life-threatening response to an allergen that can cut off air supply and cause a drop in blood pressure), are reported to have risen dramatically in American children in recent decades.

New research, however, shows that exposing children to peanut protein at ages four to six months may help them avoid developing peanut allergies. These findings led to the reversal of federal guidelines that advised parents against giving peanut-containing foods to children younger than age three.

“The revised guidelines vary based on whether the child has eczema or egg allergies, the degree of

existing allergies, and the results of allergy screening tests that may be needed before exposing the child to peanut proteins,” says **Cascya Charlot, M.D.**, chief of pediatric allergy and immunology at New York-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital.

The new recommendation is to introduce peanut proteins to babies along with other solid foods.

“Parents should be mindful that peanuts are a choking hazard and exercise caution when feeding peanuts or peanut butter to children younger than age four,” Dr. Charlot says. “Peanut butter mixed in with other purees—such as apples or bananas, for example—is a good alternative.”