African Ancestry Linked to Prevalence of Food Allergies in Kids

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Black kids and other children from African roots are more likely to show sensitivity to common allergy-causing foods, such as peanuts, milk and eggs, according to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics* and reported by Reuters.

For the study, researchers from the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago followed about 1,100 kids born at Boston Medical Center. Most children were from urban areas and low-income families, and six in 10 were identified as black by their moms.

Between the kids' second and third birthdays, scientists tested their immune responses to eight different types of common allergy-causing foods: eggs, milk, peanuts, soy, shrimp, walnuts, wheat and cod.

Researchers found that about 38 percent of black kids showed a food sensitization compared with only 22 percent of white kids. What's more, black 2-year-olds were more than twice as likely to be food sensitized if their moms breast-fed them or smoked during pregnancy. In addition, these kids were four times as likely to have an immune system response to three or more potential food allergens. And children who had more African ancestry genetic markers showed higher immune response rates to peanuts.

According to researchers, not only do these findings show genetics may play a role in how likely kids are to have allergies, but the results also tie in cultural factors related to the type of foods kids are exposed to where they're raised.

This isn't the first time studies have shown blacks are more likely to be food sensitive or allergy prone. That's why pediatricians should be aware that food allergy is a problem among African-American urban populations, said Rajesh Kumar, MD, a doctor at Children's Memorial Hospital and the study's lead researcher.

To learn more about black kids being allergy prone, click here.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Ancestry-Tiedto-Allergies-21106-2239