

# Study shows possible breakthrough in treating peanut allergies

By ACSH Staff — January 29, 2015



[1]Australian researchers have successfully trialed a peanut

allergy treatment in children, which has potential to lead to a long-term cure for the condition. About 1 percent of Americans have peanut allergies, and in Australia, where the study took place, about 3 percent of the population have peanut allergies.

Most allergic reactions are not life threatening, but some can lead to anaphylaxis, where blood pressure drops abruptly and the airways and throat can swell causing breathing difficulties, which can lead to unconsciousness or death. Peanut allergies are the most common cause of fatal food-related anaphylaxis. It is estimated in the United States that around 150 to 200 people die each year due to food allergies, and about half of those deaths are due to peanut allergies.

In the study, conducted at [Murdoch Childrens Research Institute](#) [2] in Melbourne, 28 children with peanut allergies were given a large dose of a probiotic, *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, along with a peanut protein in increasing amounts, starting with an extremely low dose under constant medical supervision, until reaching a maintenance dose of 2 grams, over an 18 month period. The daily dosage of the probiotic was equivalent to the amount of the substance that could be extracted from 20 kg (44 lb) of yogurt. Another 28 children, the control group, were given a placebo.

Two weeks after the trial ended, the children were repeatedly exposed to peanut allergen for three weeks. More than 80 percent of the children (23 of 28) treated with the probiotic did not have a reaction to the peanut allergen, compared to almost 4 percent of the placebo group.

While lead researcher, Dr. Mimi Tang, expressed her excitement at the results, further research is needed to evaluate if the results are long-lasting. These findings provide the first vital step towards developing a cure for peanut allergy and possibly other food allergies, she stated. We will be conducting a follow-up study where we ask children to take peanut back out of their diet for eight weeks and test them if they re tolerant after that.

ACSH s Dr. Gil Ross had this comment: This report is highly preliminary and very small, obviously. It is unclear exactly what role the probiotic lactobacillus plays in this regimen well, unclear to me

anyway but must be clear to the Australian researchers. Of importance, we d like to remind anyone with a peanut allergy, or any serious food allergy, to always carry an emergency injectable treatment for anaphylaxis, usually an Epi-Pen , without which an unforeseeable exposure could be life-threatening. Additionally, although this should be a given, parents should not attempt any type of replication of this experiment at home with their children who have peanut allergies.

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.freeimages.com/browse.phtml?f=download&id=1317092&redirect=photo>

[2] <http://www.mcri.edu.au/news/2015/january/peanut-allergy/>