

[IMAGE]

Dietary Fats Affect Childhood Allergies

Kids who suffer from allergies know how lousy they can make you feel, and allergy medications often have side effects like drowsiness. As a result, natural means of preventing the development of hay fever and itchy skin are increasingly being studied. Research on dietary fat intake and its association with allergic reactions is an example -- it has been suspected that eating a lot of unsaturated fat, such as margarine, may be linked to nasal and dermal (skin-related) allergic reactions.

In a recent study in *Allergy*, researchers evaluated the link between dietary fats and the risk of developing allergies. They examined 462 children, 3 to 18 years old, comparing the occurrence of allergies to dietary information. The children were studied over a nine-year period.

The results indicated that prior to developing allergies, allergy sufferers had used more margarine and less butter than the other children. Also, the level of fatty acids obtained from fish was higher in non-allergic kids than in those with skin allergies.

Providing too much margarine and not enough butter in your child's diet may be related to the development of allergies. Eating fish also may reduce allergy symptoms. More research needs to be done on a possible association between dietary fats and allergies, but in the meanwhile, be sure to provide your child with a balance of dietary fats.

Reference:

Dunder T, Kuikka L, Turtinen J, et al. Diet, serum fatty acids, and atopic diseases in childhood. *Allergy* 2001;56, pp 425-428.

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