

# American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations on the effects of early nutritional interventions on the development of atopic disease

Ananth Thygarajan and Arvil W. Burks

Division of Allergy and Immunology, Department of Pediatrics, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina, USA

Correspondence to Ananth Thygarajan, MD, Allergy/Immunology Fellow, Department of Pediatrics, Duke University Medical Center, Box 2898, Durham, NC 27710, USA

Tel: +1 919 684 8111; fax: +1 919 681 7979; e-mail: ananth.thygarajan@duke.edu

**Current Opinion in Pediatrics** 2008, 20:698–702

## **Purpose of review**

To review the American Academy of Pediatrics statement on the effects of early nutritional interventions on the development of atopic disease in infants and children.

## **Recent findings**

Recent findings suggest that restriction of maternal diet during pregnancy and lactation does not play a major role in the development of allergic disease. In high-risk infants, exclusive breastfeeding for at least 4 months prevents or delays atopic dermatitis, cow milk allergy, and wheezing early in life. There is evidence that supplementing breastfeeding with a hydrolyzed formula protects against atopic disease, especially atopic dermatitis in at-risk infants. Finally, there is little evidence that delaying the introduction of complementary foods beyond 4–6 months of age has any protective effect against allergy. There is insufficient data that any dietary intervention beyond 4–6 months of age has any protective effect against developing atopic disease.

## **Summary**

In high-risk infants, there is evidence that exclusive breastfeeding for at least 4 months, and delaying of complementary foods until 4–6 months, prevent the development of allergy. There is some evidence that supplementing hydrolyzed formulas in high-risk infants may delay or prevent allergic disease. There is no convincing evidence that maternal manipulation of diet during pregnancy or lactation, use of soy products, or infant dietary restrictions beyond 4–6 months has any effect on the development of atopic disease.

## **Keywords**

allergy, atopic disease, breastfeeding, diet restrictions, nutritional interventions