Early Feeding Practices and Development of Food Allergies

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Despite increasing efforts to prevent food allergies in children, IgE-mediated food allergies continue to rise in westernized countries. Previous preventive strategies such as prolonged exclusive breastfeeding and delayed weaning onto solid foods have more recently been called into question. The present review discusses possible risk factors and theories for the development of food allergy. An alternative hypothesis is proposed, suggesting that early cutaneous exposure to food protein through a disrupted skin barrier leads to allergic sensitization and that early oral exposure to food allergen induces tolerance. Novel interventional strategies to prevent the development of food allergies are also discussed.