

Moms of food-allergic kids need dietician's support

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Discovering your child has a severe food allergy can be a terrible shock. Even more stressful can be determining what foods your child can and cannot eat, and constructing a new diet which might eliminate entire categories of foods.

According to a new study published in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, the scientific publication of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), providing parents with detailed, individual advice from a dietician is a key component of effective food allergy care.

"We know getting a food allergy diagnosis can be confusing and scary," said dietician Carina Venter, PhD, lead author of the study. "We set out to explore what information and support mothers of kids with food allergies require and value from a dietary consultation. What we found is mothers want dieticians to help them ensure their child will be safe, and guide them through the process of creating a nutritionally complete diet. They also want to maintain normality for their child and promote independence."

Focus groups were conducted in the United Kingdom with 17 mothers of food allergic kids who sought dietary advice at an allergy clinic. According to most of the [mothers](#), the time immediately after diagnosis was the most anxious for them as they found the process daunting. They felt that over time, with the help of dieticians, they grew to understand their [child's food allergy](#) and how to cope with new information and the new dietary guidelines for their families.

"Dieticians understand the social and emotional, as well as nutritional issues that accompany food allergies," said allergist Gailen Marshall, MD, PhD, ACAAI Fellow and Editor-in-Chief of *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*. "They have the most complete information about how to undertake an elimination diet and how to begin being the kind

of detective a parent often has to be in these situations. There's a clear value for parents of food-allergic kids to meet with a dietician as they have a very specific expertise to offer."

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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