CONCLUSIONS. Longer duration of breastfeeding favorably influences lung growth in children. However, in the presence of maternal asthma, longer breastfeeding is associated with decreased airflows.

REVIEWER COMMENTS. There seems to be a differential effect of the relation of breastfeeding to lung function on the basis of the asthmatic background of the mother. Breasted children with nonatopic, nonasthmatic mothers had an increased FVC and no decrease in their airflows. However, children of mothers with asthma with longer breastfeeding did not demonstrate any improvement in FVC but had a significant reduction in airflows, suggesting that the risk for increased asthma in this group may be partly a result of altered lung growth. Children with longer breastfeeding who had atopic but nonasthmatic mothers had intermediate findings, and they showed a similar increase in FVC compared with those with nonatopic, nonasthmatic mothers but a decrease in airflows similar to children with asthmatic mothers. These findings may support the speculation that the milk of mothers with atopy or asthma may differ with regard to immunologically active substances; thus, breastfeeding in these groups may have a different effect on growth and/or development of the airways. It goes without saying that the clinical significance of these findings is unknown. Human milk is uniquely suited to the feeding of infants. There are many well-documented benefits of breastfeeding. For children of nonasthmatic mothers, this study demonstrates a further benefit of breastfeeding. Additional study is needed draw firm conclusions for other infants.

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Todd A. Mahr, MD
La Crosse, WI

Solid Food Introduction in Relation to Eczema: Results From a Four-Year Prospective Birth Cohort Study

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To assess the association between the introduction of solid foods in the first 12 months and the occurrence of eczema during the first 4 years of life in a prospective study of newborns.

METHODS. Data were taken from annually administered questionnaires from a large birth cohort (recruited 1995–1998) comprising an intervention and a nonintervention group. Outcomes were doctor-diagnosed and symptomatic eczema. Multiple generalized estimation equation models were performed for the 2 study groups.

RESULTS. From the 5991 recruited infants, 4753 (79%) were followed up. The 2 study groups were different in their family risk of allergies and feeding practices. No association was found between the time of introduction of solids or the diversity of solids and eczema. In the nonintervention group, a decreased risk was observed for avoidance of soybean/nuts, but an increased risk was seen in doctor-diagnosed eczema for the avoidance of egg in the first year.

CONCLUSIONS. The evidence from this study supports neither a delayed introduction of solids beyond the fourth month nor a delayed introduction of the most potentially allergenic solids beyond the sixth month of life for the prevention of eczema. However, effects under more extreme conditions cannot be ruled out.

REVIEWER COMMENTS. The dilemma of when to introduce solid foods during infancy continues. The data from this investigation support the notion that it is unnecessary to delay solid foods beyond the fourth month of life or allergenic solid foods beyond the sixth month of life to prevent eczema. Specifically, this investigation found no significant effect of timing or diversity of solid foods on eczema outcomes to 4 years of age. The duration of exclusive breastfeeding as compared with the timing of introduction of solid foods, including both formulas made with whole cow’s milk or soy proteins, as well as extensively hydrolyzed casein and partially hydrolyzed whey protein formulas, were examined. It is interesting to note that findings from this investigation seem to indicate that there may be a period of immunologic immaturity during which whole protein in large amounts, whether solid or liquid, may promote the development of atopic disease. These data should help to settle the argument of when to introduce solid foods during infancy for the prevention of eczema and will have a direct impact on global recommendations dealing with this clinical issue.

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John M. James, MD
Fort Collins, CO

Glutamine-Enriched Enteral Nutrition in Very Low-Birth-Weight Infants: Effect on the Incidence of Allergic and Infectious Diseases in the First Year of Life

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To determine the effect of glutamine-enriched enteral nutrition in very low birth weight infants on the incidence of allergic and infectious diseases during the first year of life. The authors hypothesized that glutamine may enhance maturation of the immune response by shifting the fetal T-helper 2 (Th2) response...
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