FDA approves new peanut allergy food labels
by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

Some food labels may soon alert parents that introducing peanut to certain infants may reduce their risk of developing an allergy to such foods.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has reviewed research on peanut allergy and approved language for certain food manufacturers to use on their labels.

"Our goal is to make sure parents are abreast of the latest science and can make informed decisions about how they choose to approach these challenging issues," FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D., said in a statement.

About 2% of children in the U.S. are allergic to peanut, and food labels already disclose when they contain it, according to the FDA. However, the Learning Early About Peanut (LEAP) trial funded by the National Institutes of Health found infants at risk of developing a food allergy might benefit if they are introduced to peanut early in life.

In January, experts released new guidelines endorsed by the Academy that recommend infants as young as 4 to 6 months with severe eczema and/or egg allergy be introduced to peanut after consultation with a pediatrician.

In response to a request from a manufacturer, the FDA announced Thursday it would allow a "qualified health claim" on food labels containing ground peanut that coincides with those recommendations.

"For most infants with severe eczema and/or egg allergy who are already eating solid foods, introducing foods containing ground peanuts between 4 and 10 months of age and continuing consumption may reduce the risk of developing peanut allergy by 5 years of age," the claim reads.

The label will specify that only one study supports the claim and recommend speaking with the child's health care provider.

The FDA does not recommend young children consume whole peanuts as they are a choking hazard.

Resources
- AAP News story "How to implement new peanut allergy prevention guidelines'
- Information for parents on peanut allergies