**New peanut allergy guidelines** announced today by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) offer the promise that early introduction of peanut-containing foods to infants can prevent the development of peanut allergy.

The new guidelines are an addendum to the 2010 Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Food Allergy in the United States.

**What you need to know:**

* Infants with severe eczema, egg allergy or both are at high risk for peanut allergy and should be given peanut-containing foods – such as peanut butter – between 4-6 months of age to reduce the risk of developing peanut allergy. The infants should first see a board-certified allergist for peanut allergy testing, which will determine if peanut can be safely introduced, and if this needs to first be done in a specialist’s office.
* Infants with mild or moderate eczema should have peanut-containing foods introduced into their diets at 6 months of age to reduce the risk of developing peanut allergy. These children do not need to first see a specialist and can have peanut-containing foods introduced at home.
* Infants without any eczema symptoms or egg allergy can have peanut-containing foods freely introduced into their diets together with other solid foods, in accordance with family preferences and cultural practice. These children also do not need to first see a specialist and can have peanut-containing foods introduced at home.
* Peanut-containing foods should not be the first solid food introduced to a child. It’s also recommended that peanut-containing foods only be given when the child is not ill.
* Never give whole peanuts to an infant as they are a choking hazard.

From Tonya Winders, President and CEO of the Allergy & Asthma Network:

“These new guidelines are very exciting in that they have the potential to reduce the prevalence of peanut allergy in the United States. Parents of at-risk children can now take steps to prevent the development of peanut allergy by introducing peanut-containing foods as early as 4 months of age.  However, we continue to strongly urge parents of at-risk children to not introduce peanut into their child’s diet without first consulting a board-certified allergist who can closely supervise and monitor the results.”

From Matthew Greenhawt, MD, MBA, MSc, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Section of Allergy and Immunology at Children’s Hospital Colorado, and co-author of the guidelines:

“These guidelines represent a wonderful opportunity to help stem the rise in peanut allergy and prevent a large number of cases of peanut allergy from ever developing.  If parents and providers buy in and follow these new recommendations, we can achieve a truly remarkable accomplishment that will have a lasting beneficial impact on the health of children across the United States."