

Is there a link between food allergies and autism?

A new study from researchers at the University of Iowa reveals a link between food allergies and autism, though many questions remain.

The study showed 11.25 percent of American children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) also have a food allergy, more than double the 4.25 percent of kids without ASD who suffer from a food allergy.

“It is possible that the immunologic disruptions may have processes beginning early in life, which then influence brain development and social functioning, leading to the development of ASD,” Wei Bao, assistant professor of epidemiology at the UI College of Public Health and corresponding author of the study, told [Iowa Now](#).

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The results, which also showed that children with ASD were significantly more likely to have respiratory and skin allergies than kids without the condition, add to a growing body of research revealing links between [immunological problems and ASD](#).

“This indicates there could be a shared mechanism linking different types of allergic conditions to ASD,” Bao told Iowa Now, adding that it’s still unclear how these conditions interact, or whether one causes the other.

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Some medical professionals say parents shouldn’t overreact to the new study.

“I wouldn’t want people to misinterpret this to say that a food allergy is causing autism,” pediatric allergist [Scott H. Sicherer](#) [said].

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