Allergic to eggs? Here’s how tweaking chicken genes can save kids from anaphylactic shock

Egg allergies are common and may develop during early childhood, resulting in unpleasant symptoms and leading to negative health outcomes.

The allergen protein ovomucoid is responsible for many of the allergic responses people with egg allergies experience. Now, genetic specialists may be able to eliminate an egg allergy at its source.

A? recent study published in *Food and Chemical Toxicology* explored the possibility of altering the genetics of hens to remove ovomucoid from eggs.

Their method utilized transcription activator-like effector nucleases (TALENs). These proteins aid in the cutting and, thus, alteration of DNA. Researchers removed the ovomucoid gene in two chicken strains. They then tested the produced eggs for safety.

“For individuals with severe egg allergies, even trace amounts of egg in food or vaccines can trigger severe allergic reactions. With the development of OVM-knockout chickens, these individuals may be able to consume eggs and egg-derived products without fear of an allergic reaction. This could dramatically expand their dietary options and reduce anxiety around food. Moreover, since eggs are used in the production of certain vaccines (such as some types of flu vaccines), this development could potentially make these vaccines safer for people with egg allergies,” [said researcher D?r. Blen Tesfu].

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