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Half of Americans Lack Knowledge about Food Allergies, Survey Finds

New campaign brings education and awareness to food allergy diagnosis, management

April 29, 2015 – Forty nine percent of Americans say they are only somewhat or not at all knowledgeable about food allergies, according to a new national survey of 1,031 American adults. Many people also have misconceptions about food allergies, including believing there is a little or no difference between food allergies and food intolerances, and that someone with a food allergy can eat small amounts of a food without having a reaction.

It's in this environment that the [Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Connection Team](#) (FAACT) and [American College of Asthma, Allergy & Immunology](#) (ACAAI) are launching a public service campaign to raise awareness of accurate food allergy diagnosis and effective management. Through public service advertising and traditional and social media, Americans will be encouraged to visit livingwithfoodallergies.org – and then take their questions and concerns to a board-certified allergist.

“When my son, Thomas, had his first reaction and then when he was diagnosed, I had no idea what we were getting into,” said Eleanor Garrow-Holding, founder and CEO of FAACT. “Knowing what an accurate diagnosis looks like and how to develop a management plan are both essential steps. But what’s most important is knowing you’re not alone.”

Visitors to livingwithfoodallergies.org will be able to quickly access science-based information from ACAAI and other trusted sources, and find a board-certified allergist in their area. The site is seamlessly integrated with FAACT’s own website, which provides links to local support groups, resources for developing food allergy and anaphylaxis management plans and other resources valuable to anyone who has a food allergy or thinks they do.

Other interesting findings from the survey include:

- More than half of respondents (68 percent) think that the average American would not know what to do if someone they’re with has an allergic reaction to a food;
- 82 percent agree that much more education needs to be done about food allergies and keeping those with allergies safe;
- 31 percent incorrectly believe the only difference between a food allergy and food intolerance is the level of severity; and

- One in four reported they would search the internet or visit a health-related website first for food allergy information.

“Too often in my practice I see patients who don’t have the correct information about food allergies,” explained allergist Todd Mahr, MD, ACAAI Fellow. “Many people aren’t taking all the steps we recommend to keep themselves or their loved ones safe. Others are living a life that doesn’t have to be as difficult as it is because they have been misdiagnosed with or think they have food allergies.”

The campaign is funded in part through a grant from the [National Peanut Board](#). Since its founding in 2001, the board – which represents America’s 7,500 peanut farming families – has dedicated more than \$12 million to independent food allergy research, education and outreach.

For more information on accurate diagnosis for a food allergy or steps on how to create a safer environment for living with a food allergy visit livingwithfoodallergies.org.

About The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Connection Team

FAACT's mission is to educate, advocate, and raise awareness for all individuals and families affected by food allergies and life-threatening anaphylaxis. FAACT is also your voice for food allergy awareness, from keeping children safe at school to dealing with workplace issues or simply taking the family out for a bite to eat. Managing a food allergy on a daily basis involves constant vigilance. FAACT is here to support you in managing your food allergies – today, tomorrow, and into the future. For more information, please visit us at FoodAllergyAwareness.org or call 513.342.1293, and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

About ACAAI

The ACAAI is a professional medical organization of more than 6,000 allergists-immunologists and allied health professionals, headquartered in Arlington Heights, Ill. The College fosters a culture of collaboration and congeniality in which its members work together and with others toward the common goals of patient care, education, advocacy and research. ACAAI allergists are board-certified physicians trained to diagnose allergies and asthma, administer immunotherapy, and provide patients with the best treatment outcomes. For more information and to find relief, visit AllergyandAsthmaRelief.org. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the National Peanut Board

The National Peanut Board represents America’s more than 7,000 peanut farmers and their families. Through research and marketing initiatives, the Board is finding new ways to enhance production and increase consumer demand by promoting the great taste, nutrition and culinary versatility of USA-grown peanuts. For more information, visit NationalPeanutBoard.org or PeanutAllergyFacts.org.

About the Survey

The food allergy research was conducted via a national online survey of 1,031 American adults ages 18 or older on March 2, 2015 through Toluna, a leading international market research firm. The results are weighted and balanced to conform to current US Census projections for gender, age, region of residence, and ethnic and racial heritage. The data have a $\pm 3.4\%$ to 3.8% Margin of Error at 95% confidence at the “all respondent” level.

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