



Peanut Residue

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Advisory Committee:	Infection Control / Science & Technology
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Overview

There is much concern for children in school and preschool about the need for preventative measures to address peanut allergens. Exposure to the allergen can lead to a range of reactions, from hives to a potentially life-threatening anaphylactic reaction that causes difficulty with breathing. While reactions are usually due to the ingestion of peanuts, there is concern that even skin contact of airborne peanut allergens can trigger a reaction. Peanut allergy is the third most common food allergy in young children and the most common food allergy in older children, adolescents and adults.

POSITION

A study was performed by the Johns Hopkins Medical Institute¹ to determine methods to remove peanut allergens. The researchers found that it was fairly easy to remove peanut allergen from hands. In the study, participants washed their hands with various cleaning agents, plain water and antibacterial hand sanitizer. Hand wipes, liquid soap and bar soap all removed the peanut allergen. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer left residual allergen on half of the hands tested. Dr. Robert A. Wood, senior author of the study, says in reference to alcohol-based hand sanitizers that "their use may not really remove the allergen, but just spread it around."

Kleenhanz® antimicrobial towelettes contain quaternary ammonium compounds that behave as detergents (i.e. are soap-like), and thus should help remove oil-like (lipid) residues when used with a mechanical action, such as a moistened towelette. The level of safety for an individual allergic to peanuts depends on the degree of sensitivity and thus the level of "peanut contamination" they are exposed to. Some extremely sensitive individuals elicit reactions to peanut aroma (i.e. airborne allergens) and should take precautionary measures as required.

References

- ¹Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions (2004, May 11). Most Household Cleaners Remove Peanut Allergens, Hopkins Study Shows.
- DrGreene.healthology.com

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