

## Kiss-induced allergy to peanut

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● In 1997, we reported in this journal on oral allergy syndrome to apple after a lover's kiss in a young woman with pollen-associated food allergy (1, 2). Her boyfriend had just eaten a fresh apple before the kiss. To the best of our knowledge, this was the first such case of "connubial" allergy to be published in the literature. Recently, we saw a patient with severe peanut

### Food allergy transferred by love.

allergy who experienced an

allergic reaction

after a kiss from his girlfriend, who had eaten peanuts 2 h before.

A 30-year-old atopic man (a medical doctor) with severe peanut allergy since childhood had developed recurrent anaphylactic reactions after ingestion of various foods (chocolate, snacks, cakes, cornflakes, and various Asian foods). The patient experienced symptoms (conjunctivitis and asthma) even when someone near him ate peanuts during a party, in a bar, or in an airplane. After a kiss from his lover, he suddenly developed swelling of his lips with an itching sensation around his mouth. His girlfriend had eaten a few peanuts 2 h before and – knowing of the life-threatening reactions of her friend to hidden peanuts – she had brushed her teeth intensively, rinsed her mouth, and chewed chewing gum. The patient's last episode of allergic reaction had happened the year

before in the USA during a party after eating a spring roll made of wholemeal including soy. The patient's allergen-specific IgE (CAP FEIA, Pharmacia Diagnostics) to peanuts was class 6 (>100 kU/l), and to soy CAP class 4 (4.6 kU/l).

It is well known that accidental ingestion of hidden peanut allergens can provoke life-threatening and fatal anaphylactic reactions in peanut-allergic patients (3, 4). Only 50 µg of peanut can provoke symptoms (5). Not only hidden allergens in food but also exposure to the allergen in the kitchen when someone is preparing food, or close physical contact with or sitting beside someone who has recently eaten the allergenic food can induce allergic reactions, as was recently shown in a poster at the Symposium on Food Allergy, 11–13 March 2001 in Venice (6). In fact, Eriksson et al. reported on 11 persons, of a total of 1139 food-allergic patients who answered a questionnaire, who had allergic symptoms after kissing. The foods eliciting symptoms were apple and carrot (four cases), as well as other birch-pollen-related foods, including fish (three cases), tree nuts (two cases), and peanut (two cases). One peanut-allergic patient also reacted to milk and egg. Two cases of facial urticaria in cow's milk (CM)-allergic children after kissing have been published as an abstract (7). These were a 9-month-old infant with CM allergy who reacted whenever kissed by his sister, and a 3-month-old infant who reacted when kissed by his mother if she had just eaten cereal with milk.

In conclusion, as shown by Eriksson et al. (6), kiss-induced allergy is probably more common than the few published case histories would indicate. In consequence, kissing can constitute a severe danger for the food-

allergic patient: therefore, before kissing, such patients should ask their lovers what they have just eaten.

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