

THE PEBBLES STUDY

Volume 1 February 2020



Welcome to our first PEBBLES newsletter

PEBBLES: Story So Far

The current phase of the PEBBLES study commenced recruitment in March 2018 and we now have well over 300 participants! To date, over 100 of our babies have completed the 12-month follow-up.

Most recently, we added an optional mouth swab (to measure oral microbiome) for the 6-week and 12-month visits and changed to a finger-prick test at 12 months instead of a heel-prick. We have also introduced an optional consent asking if you would be willing to give permission for us to obtain information about your child's health care from the Department of Human Services and the Victorian Department of Human Services. We are collecting this data to assess the economic burden of allergic diseases on families.

Our recruitment is still under way. If you know of anyone currently pregnant who may have a family history of allergy/eczema and would be interested in making a difference to allergy outcomes in infants, please point them to our [study website](#) for more information—we would love to hear from them!

Our media campaign

On 22 August we conducted a media campaign to reach more people who might be keen to find out about the PEBBLES study and its findings. Did you see PEBBLES in the news? We appeared on all the major news channels, ABC radio and the Herald Sun. You can view some of the coverage on our [website](#)

PEBBLES: Our Publications

Did you know that this is the third phase of PEBBLES study? Our first phase involved ten participants, the second phase 80 and we hope to recruit over 700 participants in this current phase. Recently, the PEBBLES Study Protocol Paper was published in the BMJ Open medical research journal. The protocol outlines everything you need to know about our research; the purpose of our study, proposed methods and how the outcomes might improve the quality of life for people living with allergic conditions.

Interested in learning more? You can read our paper [here](#).

If you are interested in reading our previous publications, you can find them on our [website](#).

Common Infant Skin Rashes

It is stressful to watch those little dots and blotches appear on your baby's skin especially when you have no idea why they have developed or how serious they might be!

A newborn's skin is generally prone to all sorts of rashes as their skin is softer, more permeable and susceptible to environmental conditions. Fortunately, most of these rashes are harmless and disappear on their own. You can find out more about some of the commonly occurring skin conditions in babies and infants and when to see the doctor via our helpful links on our website [here](#).

Economic burden of Allergy and Eczema

In the developed world, Australia is one of the countries with the highest prevalence of allergy. [Recent studies](#) have shown that conditions like hay fever (allergic rhinitis), eczema (atopic dermatitis) and anaphylactic reactions have doubled in the past years in Australia. Allergic disorders most often affect children and young adults and can impair quality of life and cause sleep disturbances, impaired learning ability and memory. Hay fever, asthma and other allergies are among the most frequently self-reported long-term illnesses observed in 12-24-year-olds in Australia.

According to a [report](#) commissioned by the Australasian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI), allergies cost Australia approximately \$7 billion per year. People with allergies, and their families, bear about half of these financial costs. We are collecting data to further assess this "economic burden" of allergic diseases on children with allergic conditions and their families. We will ask you at your next assessment whether you would like to sign the optional consent which will provide us with this useful information.