DEVELOPING A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO INFANT FEEDING FOR FOOD ALLERGY PREVENTION


Background:
- Globally, food allergy is increasing, but Australia is the 'Allergy capital of the world'.
- 1 in 10 babies have food allergy, hence a focus on primary prevention.
- ASCIA infant feeding for allergy prevention guidelines have changed and encourage introduction of all common food allergens by 1 year of age.
- This study aimed to identify a brand, imagery and key messages to encourage the introduction of common food allergens by 12 months of age.

Methods:
- Purposive sampling – participants with a relationship or potential relationship with infant feeding were recruited for focus groups.
- People without children except pregnant women were excluded from participating.
- 7 focus groups were conducted focus groups with parents (4) and healthcare professionals (3).
- Participants were presented with proposed key messages and supporting messages and brand concepts (imagery and slogans).
- Participants were asked what mechanisms should be used to communicate the messages.

Slogans tested:
- done by 1
- EAT IT TO BE A FRIEND
- FOOD'S A FRIEND
- NIP ALLERGIES

Imagery tested:

Headline message tested:
To help prevent food allergy, give your child the common allergy-causing foods before they turn one.

Key themes identified from focus groups:
- The slogan must include reference to allergy and the imagery needs to include babies eating the common food allergens
- Supporting statements should support the headline statement to provide clarity of the message
- A website clearly identified as being developed by a credible source was considered the most beneficial mechanism to communicate the allergy prevention messages

Results – brand message and mechanism:
Brand:
www.preventallergies.org.au

Message:
To help prevent food allergy, give your child the common allergy-causing foods before they turn one.
- Regularly was defined as at least twice a week
- The timeframe was defined as at least until 5 years of age.
- Clarification was provided regarding food introduction as one new food per meal.

Mechanism
- The Nip allergies in the Bub website was developed by the National Allergy Strategy.