

THE SUNBEAM STUDY NEWS

A newsletter for SUNBEAM study families

MEET THE SUNBEAM FAMILIES GIVING BACK TO SCIENCE AND GAINING PEACE OF MIND

Leah Bengel works for the Sandcastles Grief Support Program at Henry Ford Health, and first learned about the SUNBEAM Study through an employee e-newsletter. After talking it over with her husband, Drew, they decided to enroll.

“Drew has a lot of allergies, and we wanted to be aware if our daughter has allergies as early as possible,” explains Leah. “It was also an opportunity to contribute back to science and help researchers gain greater understanding of allergies for future generations.”

Their daughter Rosie was recently tested at her six-month visit for peanut, milk and egg allergies, and the Bengels learned she is not allergic to any of the foods.

“Having Rosie tested gave us peace of mind. We feel better knowing she won’t have an allergic reaction to those foods. Just a little poke and now we know she’s not at risk,” says Leah. SUNBEAM families receive allergy testing for additional foods at their 12-month visit.

Leah says Rosie has done well with the testing. “Every baby experiences pokes now and then,” she adds. “It’s all part of medicine and keeping her safe.”

Continued on page 2



Leah, Drew and their daughter Rosie Bengel of West Bloomfield are the first family to be featured in the SUNBEAM News.

Continued from page 1

MEET THE SUNBEAM FAMILIES

The samples the parents have collected as part of the study – water, breast milk, dust from the house – have been thought provoking for Leah. “Each of those components can affect allergies as we grow up,” says Leah. “It will be interesting if we’re able to learn more from the study about how environment plays a part in allergies.”

One of the aspects of the study the Bengels appreciate is access to resources and physicians. “We are giving our time, but we’re getting so much in return. We have a team on our side that knows Rosie and will lead us in the right direction if she develops allergies,” says Leah.

If you’d like to share your story in the SUNBEAM Newsletter, let us know! Email us at SunbeamStudy@hfhs.org.

OUR SUNBEAM GROUP IS STILL GROWING!

We have welcomed 128 babies and a group of moms who are expecting into the SUNBEAM Study at Henry Ford Health. Our SUNBEAM family will grow as our pregnant moms deliver their babies in the coming months. We are part of the national SUNBEAM Study, which has enrolled 75% of their goal of 2,500 participants.



More fun facts about our SUNBEAM group:

- The most common birth month for SUNBEAM babies is August, followed by December and April.
- 78 of our SUNBEAM babies are boys and 55 are girls.
- Among our participants, egg is the most common food allergy.



CONTACT US

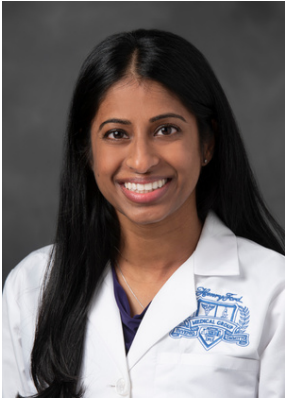
Call or Text: 313-850-0597

Email: sunbeamstudy@hfhs.org

Principal Investigator Robert Wood IRB00250006

ECZEMA, ALLERGIES AND THE SUNBEAM STUDY: WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

Did you know there is a connection between the skin condition eczema (atopic dermatitis) and allergies? That connection isn't completely understood, and one of the goals of SUNBEAM is to learn more.



Amy Eapen, M.D.

According to Amy Eapen, M.D., a pediatric allergist at Henry Ford Health and an investigator in the SUNBEAM Study, “It’s common for allergic diseases such as eczema, food allergies and asthma to occur together. We know that if a child has eczema early in life, they are three times more likely to have food allergies as a baby, and much more likely to have environmental allergies and asthma later in childhood.”

These seemingly unconnected health issues may be linked in a way we wouldn't initially consider. Dr. Eapen explains, “The skin is one of our greatest defenses against bacteria, chemicals, and allergens (things we might be allergic to),” she says. “When a person has eczema and the skin barrier is broken, a substance can enter the body through the skin. If the skin recognizes it as an intruder, our body makes antibodies called immunoglobulin E, or IgE, to fight that intruder. Then, when the body encounters that substance in the future, it overreacts with all those antibodies we’ve already produced, which is when we experience an allergic reaction.”

These antibodies aren't something we want when they're connected to everyday substances like dust, pollen or other hard-to-avoid particles. We also don't want them in connection with common foods, like egg, milk and peanuts. The environmental samples collected by SUNBEAM families, together with careful monitoring of your child for eczema and later, allergy testing, are intended to help researchers understand more about how these factors come together. At the same time, allergy testing will help you understand more about food and environmental allergies your child might develop.



Eczema (atopic dermatitis) is a red, itchy, scaly rash that can be painful.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM OUR SUNBEAM FAMILIES

When are the clinic visits? There are a total of seven visits for participating families over the course of three years. The first visit is the prenatal enrollment visit, which takes place before your baby is born. When your baby first arrives, we visit you at the hospital or in your home, whichever you prefer, for your second visit and your baby's enrollment. For the rest of the study visits – at two, five, 12, 24 and 36 months – you will be invited to one of our Henry Ford Health clinics. If you have a question about which clinic location you will visit, please call or text us. Our team looks forward to seeing you and your child and watching them grow and change over the three years!



Scan this QR code for a SUNBEAM Study timeline.



Do you contact me when it's time for a clinic visit?

Yes! A member of our team will reach out to you about 30 days before your visit. We will call, text or email you – whichever method you told us you prefer. Please save our contact information in your phone so you know it's our team trying to reach you, and be on the lookout for our call, text or email. We appreciate it when our study families get back to us so we can get your visits scheduled.

Can I contact the study team to set up my clinic visits? Yes! Our study team will usually contact you about 30 days in advance of each of your visits. However, if you know dates that work for you in advance – maybe you'll be in the clinic area for another reason, are working around a vacation, or just like to plan ahead – you can call, text or email us proactively. Tell us the dates you prefer, and we will do our best to schedule your visit when it's best for you.

Can I change the method the study team uses to contact me? Of course! If you would like to change your preference for how we contact you, call, text or email us and tell us which method you would prefer. We know things change when a new baby arrives, and we are happy to accommodate your wishes.

How many more families can join the SUNBEAM study? Right now, we are in a growth phase of the study and enrolling new families. We will continue to recruit families at least through the end of 2024, possibly longer. Visit our website, henryford.com/SUNBEAM, to learn more, or scan this QR code:



MEET THE STUDY LEADERS



Amanda Cyrus

Amanda Cyrus, lead project manager, directs all aspects and general operations of the Henry Ford Health SUNBEAM study. This includes scheduling clinic visits, collecting samples, and coordinating the work of the SUNBEAM study team. She has worked in similar roles in many other studies, including mother-baby, flu, and nutrition studies. One reason she enjoys working with SUNBEAM is that it enables her to offer parents the opportunity for their child to see a Henry Ford Health allergist, if needed, and discover if their child has a food allergy.

GET THE SUNBEAM NEWS VIA EMAIL AND ONLINE

Please let us know if you would prefer to receive the SUNBEAM newsletter via email. We will email future issues to you and you'll help us save on printing and mailing costs.

Send us an email at sunbeamstudy@hfh.org and simply say, "I'd like the newsletter emailed to me." We'll confirm your email address or addresses and add you to the email list. The SUNBEAM Study News is also available online at henryford.com/sunbeam.

NEED TO RESCHEDULE YOUR CLINIC VISIT?

If you or your child are sick or your plans changed and you cannot come to your clinic visit, please let us know. You can reschedule by texting or calling us at 313-850-0597. If you expect to be more than 15 minutes late for your visit, just text or call us so we know when to expect you.

