

BACK TO SCHOOL



A new technology called CRISPR allows plant breeders to edit specific genes within a plant that could make a hypoallergenic peanut a reality.

Could science bring the humble peanut back to school lunches?

Dealing with peanut allergies is a stressful part of back-to-school for parents. Whether you have an allergic child or are trying to get a handle on what foods are safe to send in a school lunch, figuring out what to do about peanuts isn't easy.

But science may potentially be able to bring peanuts back to popularity with the development of allergen-reduced varieties. It has never previously been possible with traditional plant breeding methods, but a new technology called CRISPR that allows plant breeders to edit specific genes within

a plant could make a hypoallergenic peanut a reality.

CRISPR can be described as a tiny pair of DNA scissors. Once the genes responsible for the major allergens in peanuts are identified, CRISPR could remove them allowing plant breeders to use what's left to breed new peanut plants with reduced allergenicity.

Experts caution that a hypoallergenic peanut is still far from reality, but it's a prime and exciting example of how foods in the future may be able to be customized to fit the needs of certain groups of consumers.



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