

Hanimune Therapeutics raises \$3.3M, sets sights on first food allergy treatment product

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Image: Lil Mixins

Lil Mixins

A selection of Lil Mixins products.

A Philadelphia company focused on mitigating or preventing food allergies in children has raised \$3.3 million in an equity financing.

Hanimune Therapeutics' private stock sale was disclosed in documents the company filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

[Meenal Lele](#), founder and CEO of Hanimune, said the 7-year-old company plans to use the funds to expand into a new area: treating those who already have food allergies.

To date, the company's [products sold under the Lil Mixins brand](#) include powders designed to help children overcome peanut, tree nut and egg allergies.

"We've developed a lot of understanding around food proteins themselves, and how they change during manufacturing," Lele said. "That led to our work in developing our first therapeutic. ... It will be a fundamentally different product for us."

The product, she said, is being developed as a treatment for people with hen egg allergies — a condition afflicting 3 million Americans.

Lele said the investment funds will be used for work on an investigational new drug application that must be approved by the Food and Drug Administration before the company can begin human clinical studies of the experimental product.

Lele said the company is also working with health insurers and state Medicaid programs to get coverage for its dietary supplements. "We want to help low-income families afford our products," she said.

Lele declined to disclose the identity of the investors who participated in the \$3.3 million equity financing. The company previously raised about \$1.3 million in two earlier investment rounds in 2019 and 2021, according to SEC filings.

A chemical engineering graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Lele helped launch an orthopedic company called Knee Creation but found a new focus after her first child was diagnosed with multiple food allergies. During that process, she learned that food allergies in children could, to a large degree, be lessened or prevented.

Not wanting her second child to face the same issues, Lele researched and eventually discovered a 2015 publication of a randomized clinical trial showing that many peanut allergies could be prevented through early introduction. Such studies were part of the basis for the American Academy of Pediatrics' 2017 guidelines for "infant-safe" allergen introduction, specifically around peanut protein. In its guidelines, the academy recommended highest-risk infants be introduced to peanuts in a safe form as early as 4 to 6 months of age alongside allergy tests.

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology made similar recommendations about early introduction for peanut and/or egg allergy.

Lele used her science background to develop an allergen introduction process for her second child and, based on the struggles she encountered, saw a business opportunity to help other parents in the same situation.

She wanted to create a shelf-stable product that could be easily given to young children. That pursuit led to her creation of the company and its Lil Mixins product line.

The company started with a peanut powder and later added a tree nut powder, a well-cooked egg powder, and a breastfeeding probiotic. Lil Mixins powders are available in individual packets as well as in a container and can be mixed with foods such as

purees. The baby probiotic is in drop form, while the probiotic for mothers comes in a capsule.

The company sells its product directly to consumers through its website and has a partnership with Target, which features Lil Mixins products in about 300 of its stores across the country.

Recently, Lele said, the business adopted the name Hanimune Therapeutics for its parent company to "more accurately reflect our broader mission."



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