

FOOD SENSITIVITIES OR INTOLERANCE

by Lawrence Wilson, MD

© December 2009, The Center for Development

Food sensitivities are nothing to sneeze at. Over 60% of the population know they must avoid certain foods. Many others are not aware they have food sensitivities. Many think that fatigue, itchy skin or a runny nose are “normal”.

Researchers may distinguish between food sensitivities, food intolerances and food allergies. Intolerances are reactions that do not involve the immune system, such as lactose intolerance. Food allergies involve typical allergic responses of the immune system. However, the terms are somewhat vague and are used interchangeably in this brief introduction to a huge subject.

Nutritional balancing science, fortunately, usually helps reduce and often eliminate all food sensitivities, although it may take a few months to several years on a complete program to restore the digestive system, and one must avoid certain common foods such as wheat that are no longer healthful foods.

SYMPTOMS OF FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies can cause or aggravate an enormous variety of symptoms. According to the *American College of Allergy and Immunology*, they include upset stomach, gastroenteritis, runny nose, dark circles under the eyes, shock, edema or swelling, anxiety, ulcers, joint pain, asthma, addictions, and rashes. In children they can cause seizures, red ear lobes, red cheeks, excessive talking or aggressive behavior, bedwetting and attention deficit.

Other symptoms are bronchitis, celiac disease, diarrhea, chronic fatigue, colic, colitis, diabetes, depression, failure to thrive, hay fever, headaches, hyperactivity, bowel disease, insomnia, iron deficiency anemia due to blood loss, learning disorders, malabsorption, myalgia, nephritis, acne and sore throat

Still more conditions possibly related to food allergies are bulimia, anorexia, alcoholism, candidiasis, constipation, Crohn's disease, conjunctivitis, delusions, dyslexia, epilepsy, fever, hypothyroidism, hoarseness, low stomach acid, irritable bowel syndrome, memory loss, multiple sclerosis, obesity, middle ear infections, premenstrual syndrome, psoriasis, ringing in the ears and dizziness.

CAUSES OF FOOD SENSITIVITIES

Eating Habits. For proper digestion and utilization, food needs to be chewed thoroughly, eaten slowly so that it mixes with saliva, and the body needs to secrete the proper enzymes to digest the food. Poor eating habits such as eating on the run, eating too fast, eating when anxious, eating too much, drinking too much water or other beverages with meals, or eating ice cold or scalding foods can all impair the digestion process.

Enzyme Deficiencies. Even if eating habits are excellent, imbalances in body chemistry can result in adrenal gland weakness, liver toxicity, enzyme deficiencies, imbalances in intestinal pH, intestinal inflammation or infection, or other difficulties that

can cause food reactions. For example, many adults lack the enzyme to digest milk sugar, causing reactions to milk products.

“Leaky Gut” Syndrome. This is the condition in which the intestine is too permeable. Undigested peptides or other food components pass into the blood from the intestine resulting in allergic reactions.

Causes of leaky gut syndrome include bacterial or viral infections, parasitic infestations such as candida albicans or amebic dysentery, Crohn’s disease or celiac disease. Other causes include the use of alcohol, Motrin, Advil, cortisone or other irritant drugs, nutrient deficiencies, antibiotic therapy, excessive sugar in the diet, excessive stress of any kind or impaired digestion for any reason.

Natural Food Constituents. Minerals, vitamins, amino acids and other food compounds are at times responsible for food reactions. For example, soy beans are high in copper while nuts are quite oily. These can cause food reactions in susceptible individuals.

Food Varieties and Processing. The book *Eat Right 4 Your Type* proposes that different blood types are more compatible with certain foods. While not true in every case, this approach to food selection is helpful for some people.

Many foods we routinely eat are hybrids, and may be genetically altered as well. This may affect the ability of some people to eat these foods. Our digestive tracts may not be prepared to handle the new food varieties.

Food processing and refining can create food intolerance. For example, some people can drink natural, whole milk, but not pasteurized, homogenized milk from cows injected with bovine growth hormone and fed antibiotics.

Many foods contain pesticide residues, as well as a chemical soup of up to twenty or thirty additives, preservatives, artificial flavors, colors, and other chemicals - all in one food!

DETECTION OF FOOD ALLERGIES

Many methods are available to detect food allergies. If you have been eating a lot of a particular food, you are more likely to register sensitivity with many of these methods. Sensitivity can vary from day to day, and food reactions are often delayed, which makes testing more difficult.

Avoid and Challenge Testing. A simple and effective method is to eliminate a suspected food for a week or two and then reintroduce it. Many people will notice they do not feel as well if they reintroduce an offending food. Energy may decrease, or one may develop a runny nose, bags under the eyes, headache, upset stomach, gas or other symptoms.

Elimination diets. A more rigorous elimination method is to either fast on just water or juice for a few days, or eat only a simple diet of rice and turkey, for example, for a few days. This will often clear the system of food allergens. Then one introduces other foods, one at a time, and notes any reactions that may occur. This can be done at home, though you must adhere to the routine strictly. Some allergy clinics also offer this as a service, and there are books about elimination regimens that explain it more fully.

Intradermal, Scratch and Sublingual Testing. These are standard methods used by allergists. They involve placing a sample of a food under the tongue, or injecting it under the skin and watching for a reaction. Then neutralizing doses of the substance can be given to desensitize the person.

Blood Tests. Among the blood tests used to detect allergies is the RAST (radioallergosorbent) test. This tests for IgE or IgG antibodies in the blood, and is fairly accurate. Another good test for food allergies is the ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) test, often excellent to detect hidden food allergies and sensitivities. Others include the cytotoxic test, the FAST (fluoroallergosorbent) test, MAST (autoradiographic), IP (immunoperoxidase) and others.

Applied Kinesiology. This procedure employs testing of muscle strength to assess food sensitivities. It is a way to tune in to the body's energy system. A food that reacts in the body will generally cause a muscle to go weak. The test is performed either by having the person eat a food and then test the muscle, or they hold a suspected food in their hand, and the test is done. Kinesiology in the hands of a skilled practitioner can be very accurate, fast and inexpensive, bearing in mind that sensitivities can change over time.

The Coca Pulse Test. With this simple test, one takes one's pulse, then eats a suspected food, preferably after not eating it for a week. One waits 10 minutes and then checks the pulse again. If the pulse increases more than about 10 beats per minute it indicates a reaction. This is not an exact method and does not register delayed reactions, but may be helpful.

CORRECTING FOOD ALLERGIES

Improve Your Eating Habits. Regular, relaxed, peaceful, sit-down meals, eating slowly, chewing thoroughly, and preferably resting for a few minutes after meals greatly assist digestion.

Twenty five years ago I had many food intolerances and had to be very careful what I ate. One day, I attended a friend's outdoor wedding that was not only relaxed, it was also hilarious thanks to several noisy ducks next door that kept interrupting the ceremony. I laughed most of the afternoon, and ate half a dozen 'forbidden foods' - with no food reactions at all.

Improve Your Diet. Most people should eat mainly steamed or otherwise lightly cooked vegetables as the most important part of their diet. With this have some animal quality protein daily such as chicken or eggs, along with whole grain rice, blue or yellow corn, or quinoa, oats, rye or barley, but not wheat. Wheat is no longer a healthful food in any form, even organically grown whole wheat. Sprouted wheat is a little better, but not highly recommended.

Raw salads are not helpful for most people today. They are hard to digest, contaminated with bacteria, and perhaps parasites, and do not provide much nutrition for these reasons. Cooked vegetables are much better today, especially if one eats in restaurants. Fruit is also not a helpful type of food for most people. The sugars tend to upset blood sugar, and tend to feed yeasts in the intestines that most people have such as candida albicans. I suggest avoiding all fruit juices, all dried fruit and most fresh fruit

as well. An exception is that 10-12 ounces of carrot or green vegetable juice daily is helpful for most everyone.

Pasteurized and homogenized dairy products, with the exception of butter, are not very healthful foods. Try to find certified raw, organically grown dairy products. Most cheeses, milk and yogurt is not very healthful today and anyone with food sensitivities should avoid most of it, at least until the digestive system has a chance to heal. Goat milk products are often tolerated better, especially if raw. Gluten-containing foods (rye, oats and barley) are also common allergic foods and avoiding all gluten-containing grains is helpful for many people today. In fact, most people who are ill cannot digest any grains very well, so these foods may need to be minimized until the digestive tract heals to some degree.

Eat a variety of preferably fresh, high-quality, minimally processed and preferably organically grown foods to minimize your exposure to pesticides and chemical additives. This can greatly reduce digestive stress. Quality food also provides many more vital nutrients needed to maintain the digestive and immune systems.

Avoid all refined sugars, refined table salt, refined flour and artificial or chemicalized foods. Also avoid eating at most chain or fast food restaurants, as the quality is usually not nearly as good as at restaurants that prepare all food freshly.

Reduce coffee, spicy and irritating foods until digestion improves. One cup of coffee is acceptable for most people, but no more and not strong coffees such as cappuccinos, or Turkish blends.

Variety And Food Rotation. A good rule of thumb is not to eat the same food more than two days in a row. Many people will find this difficult. However, it is a worthwhile goal, and can help prevent and correct some food allergy problems. Simple meals, simple food combinations, and avoiding excessive quantities of liquids with meals may also benefit digestion and minimize food reactions.

Reduce Stress. Any method to reduce stress may be helpful. Meditation, regular exercise, rest, relaxation, massage and many therapies may benefit food allergies this way. Deep breathing can be particularly beneficial for digestion. A positive mental attitude can be a powerful factor to help reduce stress and restore adrenal gland activity to optimal levels.

Reduce Chemical Exposure. The body has a threshold for stress from all sources. Breathing impure air, drinking water containing chlorine, fluorides, heavy metals and other toxins, and general exposure to toxins all tax the liver, the immune system and other body systems. Even sitting under unnatural light all day stresses your body. Reducing your general exposure to chemicals and toxins can reduce food allergies.

Improve Body Chemistry. Biochemical imbalances specifically related to food allergies include depleted adrenal glands. The adrenals, when functioning correctly, produce enough cortisol and cortisone to stop most allergic reactions.

Another common imbalance is excessive cell permeability. Excess permeability allows foreign substances to be absorbed into the cells, where they cause reactions. Many nutrients including vitamin C, bioflavonoids, essential fatty acids and others are

needed for proper cell membrane function. Another imbalance that can give rise to allergic symptoms is a high histamine level. Low thyroid is another common condition that can contribute to food allergies.

Supplementary Nutrients. Correction of body chemistry and rebuilding the digestive system usually requires supplementary nutrients. The best approach, in most cases, is a complete nutritional balancing program. If one is not ready for this, most everyone can benefit from a digestive aid with ox bile and pancreatin, a very pure diet, drinking distilled or spring water only, and adding a few supplements such as kelp, if possible, vitamins A, B, C, D and others.

Detoxify. Many times, allergic symptoms will improve as toxins are removed from the body. The only methods I most recommend are the use of a dry, low-temperature, preferably near infrared light sauna, coffee enemas, colonic irrigation, or other means of sweating such as steam baths, perhaps. Be sure to avoid ionic foot baths such as the BEFE, Q2, Bio-cleanse and others, as these are not safe. Nor do I recommend clay baths, although they will detoxify the body to some degree.

Allergy Testing. This is not often needed. However, testing via kinesiology, electroacupuncture, blood tests, blood typing or other means may help pinpoint problem foods that you are not aware of. One can often do avoidance and challenge tests at home, keeping a food diary. Then set up a rotation program with the remaining non-allergenic foods. Introduce unfamiliar foods slowly.

Candida Albicans. Overgrowth of candida albicans and other yeasts in the intestines often produces food sensitivities and contributes to leaky gut syndrome. You can help starve the yeast by avoiding all sugars, fruits, juices and other sweets. You may also need to limit carbohydrate intake and focus the diet more on vegetables and proteins. Usually, deeper correction of body chemistry are necessary to correct the tendency for candida overgrowth.

Neutralization methods. These include allergy shots, NAET (Nambudripad Allergy Elimination Technique) and other methods involving tapping, acupuncture and homeopathy. They will reduce allergic symptoms for some people. Homeopathic neutralization using electroacupuncture machines such as the Dermatron or Computron are also helpful for some. These are not a regular part of nutritional balancing science because they do not go deep enough. However, they can be most helpful if other methods are not reducing the allergies fast enough.

BRAIN ALLERGIES AND ADDICTION

Food reactions can affect not only the body, but the brain and behavior. This can give rise to bizarre symptoms from depression and anxiety to suicidal and psychotic behavior. This has been well-proven by orthomolecular psychiatrists and holistic allergists such as Doris Rapp, MD, who pay attention to the behavioral effects of allergies.

In *Seven Weeks to Sobriety*, author Jane Larson notes that some alcoholics have an allergic reaction to alcohol that contributes to their addiction. One can become addicted to any allergic food or beverage. This may seem odd, but it is one factor that can slow recovery from food allergies and conditions like alcoholism.

CONCLUSION

Food allergies contribute to hundreds of symptoms and illnesses. In part, they are the result of a radically altered and often chemically-contaminated food supply. In part, they are a product of modern unhealthy lifestyles, toxic living environments, a low level of general health in the population and the fast-food mentality.

Having suffered with many food sensitivities myself, I found that food allergies are an intriguing if annoying way to force oneself to clean up one's diet and lifestyle, and to tune in to oneself better to figure out what foods and eating habits are best. Also, it may be our body's way of keeping us from living on junk foods that aren't healthful anyway. So don't despair if you suffer from food allergies. Simplify, substitute, take life slowly and gently, and begin a corrective program based on [nutritional balancing science](#) and you can overcome food allergies.

Resources

Crook, W.G., *Detecting Your Hidden Food Allergies*, Professional Books, Jackson, TN, 1988.

Dumke, N.M., *5 Years Without Food: Food Allergy Survival Guide*, Allergy Adapt, Inc., 1998.

Emsley, J. and Fell, P., *Was It Something You Ate? Food Intolerance, What Causes It and How To Avoid It*, Getty Center for Education in the Arts, CA, 2000.

Feingold, B., *Why is Your Child Hyperactive?*, Feingold Assn of the United States, PO Box 6550, Alexandria, VA 22306, phone: 703-768-FAUS.

FAAN, *College Guide for Students with Food Allergies; The Alexander Series (for children); and The Food Allergy News Cookbook*, Food Allergy Network, Fairfax, VA, 1999, phone: 703-691-2713. (They offer many educational materials about food allergies)

Gioannini, M., *The Complete Food Allergy Cookbook*, Prima, Rocklin, CA, 1997.

Joneja, J.V., *Dietary Management of Food Allergies and Intolerances*, 2nd ed., JA Hall, Burnaby, B.C., 1998.

Mandell, M., *Dr. Mandell's 5-Day Allergy Relief System*, Pocket Books, NY, 1979.

Mumby, K., *The Food Allergy Plan*, CRCS Publications, Reno, NV, 1986.

Practical Allergy Research Foundation, PO Box 60, Buffalo, NY 14223, or phone: 716-875-0398. (Source for Dr. Rapp's books and tapes).

Rapp, D., *Is this Your Child's World?*, Bantam Books, NY, 1996. Also wrote *Is this Your Child? And The Impossible Child*.

Reno, L. and Devrais, J., *Allergy Free Eating*, Celestial Arts, Berkeley, CA, 1995.

Smith, N., *Allie the Allergic Elephant*, Jungle Communications, Colorado Springs, CO, 1999. (For young children)

Wedman, B., *Living With Food Allergies: Complete Guide to a Healthful Lifestyle*, Contemporary Books, Lincolnwood, IL, 1999.

Weiner, E., *Taking Food Allergies to School*, Jayjo Books, Valley Park, MO, 1999. (For children, teachers and care givers)

Zevy, A. and Tebbutt, S., *No Nuts For Me!*, Tumbleweed Press, Tampa, FL, 1999. (For children age 3 to 8)

A few web sites are: www.allallergy.net , www.peanutallergy.com , www.foodallergy.org,