

Hidden Food Allergies Present Tricky Issues

More than 50 percent of our immune system is found in our digestive tract, which is why it is important to have a properly functioning digestive system. Unfortunately, most doctors don't recognize how food sensitivities and food allergies can affect those who suffer with irritable bowel, celiac, Crohn's, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis, eczema, psoriasis, fibromyalgia, lupus, MS, and heart disease.

People who struggle with bloating, gas, indigestion, reflux, and other irritable bowel problems may not realize that the root cause may be associated with hidden food allergies. These unknown allergens, if allowed to continue, will trigger inflammation and weaken the immune system. It is this constant exposure to allergens that overworks and confuses the immune system. The ultimate result can be autoimmune and heart diseases.

Food allergens irritate and inflame your intestinal lining, which compromises your health and digestion. First, allergens reduce your ability to absorb the nutrients in your food. Just because you ate it doesn't mean you absorbed the nutrients in the food. This is a critical step in healing, because the only way to heal and strengthen your body is to nourish it. If your digestive system is compromised, you won't provide your body with an adequate supply of nutrients.

Second, undigested food particles can leak across the intestinal wall and enter your systemic circulation. This is where the immune problem begins. These undigested food particles are looked upon as "foreign invaders" by your immune fighters. This triggers an antibody and histamine response to fight these foreign invaders.

This is why the immune system becomes confused. Your immune fighters—lymphocytes, macrophages, and other white blood cells that attack and destroy harmful invaders—become confused as to which are the harmful, bad guys and which aren't. These undigested food particles aren't supposed to be there and are looked upon as the enemy, just as viruses, bacteria, and other microbes are.

The Ill Effects of Stress

Stress triggers cortisol, one of your primary stress hormones. Cortisol causes erosion of your intestinal lining, which can lead to ulcers. This erosion makes you more susceptible to food allergens and other harmful pathogens, such as yeast, fungus, candida, and parasites, which contributes to the bloating, gas, and indigestion. Can you see the vicious cycle?

Constant stress will also interfere with your body's ability to produce an adequate supply of digestive enzymes and hydrochloric acid (HCL). These two components are extremely important when it comes to good digestion. This is one of the main reasons I recommend a good digestive enzyme with HCL, like 'Digest-Plus', for many of my patients who complain of indigestion and other irritable bowel problems. This is especially important for those of us in our 40s, 50s, and better, because as we age we produce less digestive enzymes and HCL.

To properly digest your food, you also need to be in your "resting-digesting" mode. Unfortunately, most people's lives are on the fast-track, which puts their bodies in the "fight or flight" mode. When you are constantly running from the 'saber-tooth tiger,' the last thing your body will do is digest your food.

This is why you need to eat your meals in a relaxed state—not in the car on the way to a meeting, during rush hour. This should also explain the fact that it's not too much acid that

is causing all the digestive problems, but rather the lack of HCL, which is needed to break down protein.

Undigested protein begins to rot and putrefy in your tummy. It is those undigested protein molecules that cross over into your systemic circulation that cause all the tummy upset many Americans are complaining about. It's a vicious cycle.

The Inflammation Connection

Heart disease is the number-one killer in America. The true cause of heart disease is inflammation. Inflammation also triggers an increase in cholesterol. Unfortunately, just lowering the cholesterol is like closing the barn door after the cows have gotten out. You need to be addressing the cause, which is inflammation.

The greatest source of inflammation for most Americans comes from their diet. Improperly digested food irritates and inflames the body. This causes the adrenal glands to produce more cortisol, which is needed to reduce the inflammation. This constant demand on the adrenal glands can easily overwork them and cause adrenal exhaustion and fatigue, which is a primary contributor to so many health problems.

If you're suffering from arthritis, fibromyalgia, and joint pain, along with constant digestive problems, you can easily be causing so much inflammation in your body that your adrenal glands can't keep it under control. This could then cause an elevation of your cholesterol as a result of the inflammation. Are you seeing that vicious cycle now?

Don't forget, all the stress triggers increase production of adrenaline, cortisol, and norepinephrine, which causes your arteries to constrict, making your blood pressure go up. Additionally, the extra cortisol will trigger an increased production of insulin, which signals your body to start storing calories—*not* burn them! This will then take you down the road of cravings, weight gain, insulin resistance, and

diabetes.

Calming Down the Intestines

The first step in calming down your inflamed tummy is to stay away from *all* potentially irritating foods. No dairy, wheat, corn, soy, peanuts, coffee, artificial sweeteners, or MSG for two-four weeks. You need to remove all of these foods, because if you have more than one offending food and don't eliminate it from your diet, you may not give your digestive system a true chance to recover and repair. This is not a lifetime ban! In many cases, these foods can be re-introduced after your digestive system has quieted down and healed.

This elimination diet may cause some people to ask, "What am I supposed to eat? You've taken everything out of my diet." For some people who don't eat enough fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds, this elimination diet may make them feel like there aren't many choices. This is why I recommend the NatraLean Health Bars. They are hypoallergenic and contain no dairy, wheat, corn, soy, peanuts, artificial sweeteners, or trans fatty acids to irritate and inflame your tummy. They come with 8 grams of fiber and 7 grams of mono-unsaturated fats (the good fats), which are key in helping to reduce inflammation.

Breaking the Vicious Cycle

The bottom line: Eliminating food allergies can not only help with allergies and sinusitis, but can also help with many of the other health complaints, including autoimmune and heart disease. If you're looking for a natural approach that targets the cause of your problem, eliminate those common food allergens, and add some digestive enzymes with HCL, fish oils, and nutrients to support your adrenal glands (I recommend Adrenal Fuel). You'll be amazed at how much better your body will begin to feel and function; and the better your body functions, the better it runs.

FYI ... One last piece of valuable information—an inflamed

intestinal lining also hinders the production of serotonin, which is produced in the gut. Decreased serotonin levels are associated with depression, anxiety, insomnia, PMS, cravings, and ADD/ADHD.

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