

INTERESTING WEBSITE ARTICLES

Allergic symptoms in children are a major clue that something is wrong with the child. Rather than covering up the problem using a drug, it is important to recognize that allergy symptoms are a warning that something being given to the child is causing them a problem. (<http://www.healingdaily.com/conditions/allergies.htm>)

Allergies: causes and solutions

In simple terms, an allergy is a hyperactive response of the immune system to certain substances which are "foreign" to our bodies. These substances are called "allergens", and they can range from food and pollen to dust and drugs. Allergies are something we acquire throughout life, and some people are more susceptible than others.

Conventional treatment of allergies is most commonly directed at blocking the immune response, or in more severe cases, at suppressing the entire immune function with steroids, both systemic and topical. While this approach can provide symptomatic relief, it does nothing to address the underlying cause of the problem. Patients often become dependant on their medication, they suffer from numerous side effects, and more importantly, they worsen their overall health by constantly suppressing their immune system.

In October 2002, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reported that Pfizer's blockbuster antihistamine drug "Zyrtec" had gained a supplemental U.S. approval for use in children as young as 6 months old. Zyrtec (cetirizine hydrochloride), which is currently indicated to relieve symptoms of allergic rhinitis - nasal inflammation - and to treat itching and hives in adults and in children age 2 and older, has been cleared for those 2 indications in children 6 months and older.

So, what is the problem with using an antihistamine drug for children?

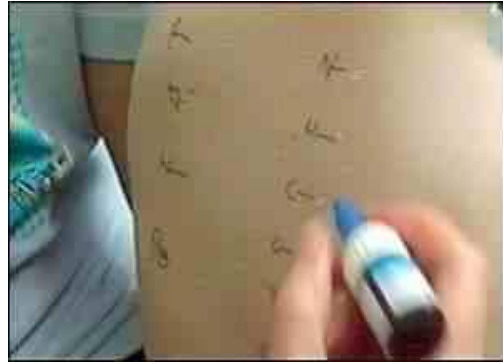
This is a classic example of the drug companies wanting to push their expensive drug band-aids for problems which in no way require a drug solution.

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Usually the offending agent is the food which the child is eating. This problem is greatly reduced in children who are breast-fed, although allergies still exist in some cases. In these cases it is usually the mother's diet which needs to be cleaned up. The 2 biggest culprits are dairy and gluten (a protein found in wheat, barley, rye, oats and spelt).



Usually removing these foods from the child's diet, and making sure the child is given enough omega-3 fats will eliminate the vast majority of allergies. Other supplements have also been well documented to reduce allergies in infants. The classic here would be beneficial bacteria, like acidophilus.

A team of researchers from Finland found that children who eventually developed allergies ate less butter and more margarine compared with children who did not develop allergies(1).

This study is not the first to suggest that certain types of fatty acids may play a role in the onset of allergic diseases. Polyunsaturated fats like those in margarine are believed to promote the formation of prostaglandin E2, a substance which promotes inflammation and causes the immune system to release a protein which triggers allergic reactions. Remember that butter is a natural food, while margarine is one of the worst things you can eat.

Their results support the hypothesis that the quality of the fat consumed in the diet is important for the development of allergic diseases in children.

Food allergies

If you suffer from food allergies, it is only by addressing the "whys" of your food allergies that you can hope to actually solve the problem.

Heredity is often cited as a cause of food allergies, and it certainly plays a role since a recessive gene has been identified as being linked to IgE-mediated food allergies.(2) Repeated exposure to the same foods, especially in large quantities is also a factor.(3) This is one reason I recommend in the juicing section, that you rotate and vary the vegetables you use in your juicing program. Yet other factors also contribute to the number and severity of allergies most allergy-prone people endure. Let's examine them.



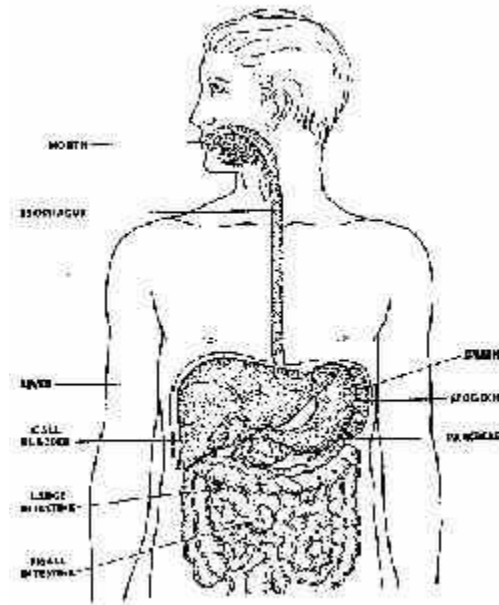
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Food allergies and 'leaky gut'

The most common cause of multiple food allergies, according to many allergies experts, is having a 'leaky gut' - increased intestinal permeability. Small openings can develop in the lining of the intestine, which allow large molecules of undigested or incompletely digested foods to enter the bloodstream.

The liver is the main organ inside the human body whose function is to process substances which are "foreign" to our body and to make them "friendly". If the quantity of incompletely digested foods which enters the bloodstream is too great for the liver to 'clear' almost immediately, the immune system then recognizes these molecules as being foreign to the body and produces antibodies against them.



When the food is eaten again and again and passes into the bloodstream undigested or only partially digested, the antibodies bind with the food. These antibody-food complexes can travel through the bloodstream to any part of the body where they then cause problems.

There are many causes of 'leaky gut'. Babies for example are born with higher intestinal permeability than older children or adults. Therefore, ideally infants should consume only breast milk for the first several months of life and other foods should be introduced cautiously.(4) If breast feeding is not possible, a completely hydrolyzed formula such as "Nutramigen" should be used because it is already broken down into simple sugars, free amino acids, and other very small units.(5) Cow's milk is highly allergenic and should not be given to babies. Neither should soy formula.

Internal factors in a patient's body can cause or contribute to a leaky gut. These include nutritional deficiencies, inflammatory bowel disease, poor digestion, and food allergies. There is a vicious cycle involved with these internal factors since the leaky gut also causes them or contributes to their severity.(6)

Finally, unfriendly organisms present in the digestive tract can cause increased intestinal permeability. These infections can involve protozoan parasites, yeasts such as Candida albicans, bacteria which are conventionally considered "pathogens" such as Salmonella or an overgrowth of bacteria usually considered nonpathogenic, such as Klebsiella or Pseudomonas. Hence the importance of maintaining a healthy intestinal flora.

Parasitic infestations are on the increase because of changes in our lifestyles which have occurred over the last few decades. International travel is now commonplace. If you are not a traveler, the world and its parasites will come to you, brought in by imported produce from countries where sanitation is sub-standard.

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A common cause of bacterial or fungal problems in the intestine is often the repeated or long term use of antibiotics. Antibiotics kill both the bacteria you want them to kill AND the 'friendly' bacteria in the intestine. This leaves these areas open to be colonized by unfriendly bacteria, yeast, and parasites.

Alcoholic beverages, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs - NSAIDs - (aspirin, ibuprofen, ketoprofen, naproxen, prescription arthritis medications, etc) cause increased intestinal permeability and can compound the problem of 'leaky gut' and contribute to food allergies..(7)

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs - NSAIDs - are now being sold without a prescription and without much warning about their side effects. This is very unfortunate, as is the sometimes seemingly indiscriminate prescribing of these drugs. For anyone with the possibility of compromised intestinal health, even a single dose of a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug can increase intestinal permeability tremendously.(8)

The Physician's Desk Reference warns about the possibility of gastrointestinal bleeding, ulceration, and perforation when using nonsteroidal inflammatory drugs, and reports that 1 arthritis drug can lead to the development of inflammatory bowel disease.(9) In my opinion, you would be wise to avoid nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to prevent such problems.

Because we may not absorb nutrients from foods to which we are allergic, and because these foods contribute to the irritation of our intestine and decrease absorption even further, the first thing to consider in planning your diet is that you do not eat foods to which you are allergic.

If you have multiple food allergies, the offending foods must be eliminated and all other foods should be eaten at intervals of 4 to 5 days or longer. This is known as a 'rotation' diet. Rotation diets are necessary for people with multiple allergies because if you have overt allergies to many foods, it is likely that you have slight, subclinical allergies to many other foods which you consider safe. Eating these foods on a rotated basis reduces your exposure to them and hopefully will help preserve your tolerance for them.

Food allergies and impaired digestion

Many people with food allergies suffer from impaired digestion. Incomplete digestion of foods which then pass through a leaky gut into the bloodstream is a major contributing factor to the problem of food allergies.(10)

Dr. William Philpott, in his book "Victory Over Diabetes", recommends the rotation of digestive enzymes on a 4-day cycle.(11) This can be accomplished by using pancreatin (from pork and beef), plant enzymes (from Aspergillus oryzae), bromelain (from pineapple), and papain (from papaya). Bromelain and papain are active in the digestion of protein only. Studies have shown them to be much less potent than pancreatin. More about digestive enzymes here. I spend a lot of time researching the best prices for supplements on the internet, and in my opinion the lowest price for high quality digestive enzymes can be found here.

Vitamin C is a general anti-allergy vitamin. We experience allergic symptoms when an allergen-antibody complex causes mast cells to release histamine and other allergy mediating chemicals. Vitamin C helps to stabilize mast cells so they are less likely to release these substances.

If people with food allergies avoid harmful substances and address the factors at the root of their allergy problems, such as nutrition, digestion, intestinal health, their allergies can be overcome. It may take time, but good health is possible.

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