



One man's food is another man's *poison, or medicine?*

Dr Nigma Talib on those elusive food allergies

Today, things have changed rapidly, we are living in environments that we are not native to and eating diverse foods that may or may not suit our body's needs. As a result, our bodies have had to adapt and this has caused our immune system to work overtime creating delayed hypersensitivity food allergies. Almost an astounding 70% of patients tested have hypersensitivities to certain foods and delayed food allergy responses. The ELISA IgG blood test is the most effective and efficient method in definitively diagnosing a food allergy and checking for an immune reaction.

An allergy occurs when the body reacts to an otherwise innocuous substance (allergen) as though it were a foreign invader, such as a bacterium or virus. When the substance is a regular food or beverage we consume in everyday life, it becomes a case of mistaken identity. Of course, if it were a bug, the immune

system would recognise this as foreign and usually fight off the invader in a few days. Where there is a reaction to something that is frequently eaten (or to something unavoidable in the environment), the immune system is constantly being triggered into overreacting when there really is no threat. This exhausts the immune system and depletes the body of the nutrients that it needs to function properly. Therefore when a real bug comes along, the depleted body just doesn't have what it needs to fight back.

One of the long-term effects of allergies is a drained immune system, therefore susceptible to frequent colds or other infections. 'Allergic shiners' are dark semi-circles under the eyes, looking like 'raccoon eyes' or a pair of glasses. They are a good indication that someone probably has food allergies. Common digestive symptoms of food allergies include gas and bloating (which may be sporadic or

continuous), nausea, diarrhoea, constipation, tenderness of the abdomen, abdominal cramps or colic in babies. However, it is important to note that a food allergy will not necessarily create digestive discomfort alone. A delayed food allergy may also cause problems in other areas of the body such as: chronic ear, tonsil, sinus or chest infections which may respond to antibiotic treatment, but which keep recurring, hives, eczema, psoriasis and other skin rashes, wheezing, asthma and hyperactivity with or without attention deficits.

Conclusion

There is a difference between good food and food that is good for you, therefore you may think you are eating healthy, wholesome foods when in fact these may be the allergens and triggers for a variety of health concerns. By eliminating identified food from the diet for a minimum of six months, the digestive tract and immune system are allowed to heal and one can return to experiment with eating the allergen again, as long as it is no more than a few times per week.

Dr. Nigma Talib, is a world renowned Naturopathic Physician with clinics in Canada and the UK. For more information, please visit www.healthydoc.com

