Allergies & Holistic Healing

This book is a thorough review of the causes of allergies and sensitivities, from environmental toxins to food allergens and sensitivities. The information can help you determine if your diet or your environment is damaging to your health. It also gives ideas and tips to aid you in staying healthy, as well as the best holistic treatments for allergies.

When I began my medical practice in 1989, there was a lack of well-written and reliable information on the subject of allergies. This book is the product of years of research, reading, attending seminars, and personal observations and experience. I have tried to fill this book with practical information to help you find a more natural way of treating allergies and maintaining health.

What Causes Allergies and Sensitivities?
Western dietary habits have changed drastically over the last hundred years. The biggest changes have been the refining of food, use of food additives, and the increased consumption of animal products. We also have more atmospheric pollutants and suffer more mental and emotional stress. This additional burden placed on the body contributes enormously to the prevalence of allergic-type symptoms. The incidence of allergies and sensitivities may be greater than the incidence of any other type of illness affecting people. A person who suffers from various seemingly unrelated symptoms that produce a multitude of minor, chronic complaints is a prime candidate to investigate for possible allergies. Besides food, consider chemical and other environmental sources as possible causes.

Diet of an Infant
Until about four to six months of age, a human infant cannot digest any food except breast milk. About that time the intestines become lined with a substance that produces the digestive enzymes necessary for the proper digestion of starches. A food introduced to infants too early in their development will not digest properly and can leak through the lining of the intestine and out into other parts of their bodies. The immune system guards the body against foreign invaders such as germs and viruses, but doesn't recognize this undigested food as a "normal" part of the body. It treats these foreign food particles as an enemy and attacks them as if they were unfriendly germs. The child's immune system never gets a chance to develop fully. This immature, struggling system weakens, gets confused, and develops an intolerance for these prematurely eaten foods.

Addiction
If a child's system has to cope with a stressful diet, malnourished body, and a stressful home life, the natural response is to reach for sweet-tasting, rapidly absorbing, high-energy foods. Most readily available sweets contain milk, wheat, corn, eggs, and refined sugars. They are highly addictive substances and may cause a feeling of lethargy, like a natural tranquilizer. For a while it seems to make the stress more bearable. The more stress the more the need to get the "fix." It takes increasing amounts to feel "normal." As this hidden addictive process develops, the craving increases. If the child does not eat the food, they experience the symptoms of withdrawal, depression, anxiety, and irritability. The foods a person craves and eats most often, or consumes in large amounts, are the most likely ones to cause an adverse response.

Gut Permeability
The gut lining was thought to be an impermeable barrier to food proteins and large polypeptides. There is now evidence that these large molecules can and do pass through the human gut intact into the bloodstream, even in normal conditions. Permeability further increases after the ingestion of an offending food or allergen. This intestinal permeability or "leaky gut syndrome" may help explain why it tends to be the foods that you eat the most often that are the problems.

The Incomplete Digestion of Foods
When foods, particularly their protein components, do not completely digest, they act as allergens. When these components absorb into the body, the immune system does not recognize them as nutritional and beneficial. It responds protectively by producing antibodies to that food and starting a series of reactions affecting many tissues and organs. The results can be allergies and sensitivities to various foods. If a food

only partially breaks down, especially the protein from gluten (grains) and casein (dairy), the results could be the production of toxins in the digestive tract. If absorbed into the blood and transported across the blood-brain barrier, these proteins could produce behavioral abnormalities

The Detoxification System
Being hypersensitive depends upon the person's hereditary predisposition, environmental vulnerability, individual biochemistry, and the toxic load at a particular time. The causes are different for each individual, each person having their own unique total toxic load. It is interesting that modern medicine tries to treat everyone with allergies the same as if they appear to have the same problem. They ignore that once the body becomes overloaded and unable to handle the incoming toxins, further exposures cause a back-up of toxic metabolites that damage other regulatory enzymes and proteins. If an individual's detoxification system works efficiently, then a fair amount of these toxic agents do not cause a problem. If there is a large toxic burden, even the best system does not work well enough and the individual gets sick. If the system is impaired due to genetic or nutritional defects, the body will simply store large amounts of these toxic agents. Then the detoxification system cannot function at its optimum and becomes overloaded and intolerant to new irritants.

Liver Congestion
Liver congestion due to an improper diet may be a factor in allergies. Undigested foods usually stimulate the immune system to increase histamine. The body's liver produces the most effective anti-histamines available to neutralize the allergic or sensitivity reaction, but if it is compromised and not functioning efficiently the histamine can build up and trigger symptoms. Under normal circumstances an individual never notices a problem, but a liver that is "plugged up" with toxins and fatty tissue cannot neutralize the allergic reaction. The excessive use of over-the-counter antihistamines may cause more liver damage allowing the liver to handle histamine less and less. A toxic level of heavy metals in the body can further affect the liver's ability to detoxify.

Celiac Disease
In some cases there is so much damage to the intestinal lining that a disease called "sprue" or "celiac disease" develops. A person has an intolerance, especially to gluten-containing grains. This causes malabsorption of any grain containing this protein. Because of the damage to the intestinal lining, other foods may not be tolerated either. This is often true of foods that are raw or rich in fiber. The digestive tract becomes irritated causing the intestinal villi to lose their normal ability to function, resulting in decreased absorption. The bowel walls become thin and allow toxic substances into the bloodstream resulting in allergic reactions.

Digestive Enzymes
Food allergies and sensitivities often improve when using the appropriate digestive enzymes, but not everyone needs hydrochloric acid or pepsin to help break down foods. Plant enzymes can help a wide variety of conditions including celiac disease, maldigestion, malabsorption, lactose intolerance, and fatty stool. Enzymes derived from *Aspergillus oryzae* and other fungal species are effective in the treatment of a broad range of human diseases. In certain cases, fungal or plant enzymes are more effective than enzymes derived from animal sources. It seems that aspergillus-derived enzymes can digest food antigens that leak into the blood stream because of inadequate protein digestion. Many of the enzymes derived from this fungus and related fungal species are very stable and have a high activity under a broad range of pH conditions. It is advisable to consult a health practitioner to determine the type of digestive enzyme necessary for your particular problem.

Abnormal Gut Flora
People with food intolerances may have abnormal intestinal microflora, but pathogens don't have to be present. It may be a disorder of bacterial fermentation in the colon. The human gut bacteria, *Escherichia coli*, is present in the stool in higher percentages when people have a variety of food-related autoimmune problems such as Crohn's disease. There may be an increase in abnormal bacterial flora in people with rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis, as well as chronic yeast infections. Correct this problem by rebalancing the beneficial gut flora in the intestinal tract.

Parasites
A parasitic infection in the intestinal tract can cause symptoms that are hard to diagnose. Warning signs include constipation, diarrhea, gas and bloating, irritable bowel syndrome, muscle aches and pains, anemia, allergies, skin conditions, nervousness, peptic ulcers, sleep disturbances, chronic fatigue, and other immune dysfunctions. See my book, "The Parasite Menace."

Bacteria
The bacteria, *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*), may underlie other stomach problems and be indirectly involved in food allergies and yeast overgrowth. If this organism is in the stomach, it may explain why there is low stomach acid because it can destroy the cells that produce stomach acid (hydrochloric acid). A study of 275 individuals with symptoms of peptic ulcer disease, hives, sinusitis, and even allergies showed the cause could be *Helicobacter pylori*. After treatment to kill the bacteria, the acid concentration increased. Since these bacteria cause a lowering of stomach acid it may predispose an individual to gastric cancer. See my book, "The Bacteria Menace."

Adrenal Insufficiency
The adrenal glands are two almond-size glands that sit above the kidneys. They produce a variety of hormones including cortisol, an anti-inflammatory hormone that normally serves to prevent allergic reactions. When exposed to an irritating substance, the body increases its production of these anti-inflammatory hormones. This usually prevents an allergic response from occurring. Many people suffer from allergies because they are not producing the proper amounts of adrenal gland hormones. It is the major cause of allergies to pollen, dust, mold, animal hair and dander, foods, and environmental pollution and chemicals.

Improper Dosage of Vitamin and Minerals
Supplementing with the improper dosage of vitamins and minerals can unbalance the body's chemistry and cause reactions. Common examples of incorrect usage would be giving high doses of B-complex vitamins to fast oxidizers and giving copper to a slow oxidizer. A particular nutrient in a food such as the high copper levels in soybeans can cause a reaction to that food if there is already excessive copper in the body. A hair analysis can determine minerals levels and metal toxicity.

Cosmetics
Be aware that many chemical substances absorb through the skin directly into the blood stream. The chemical ingredients in cosmetics are the cause of many allergies, especially on or near the areas they touch. Sometimes the symptoms may not even seem related such as headaches, sinusitis, or sore throats.

Drugs and Vaccines
Another common cause of allergies is the use of drugs and vaccines. It is common to see skin diseases such as eczema and psoriasis occur soon after a vaccination, especially repeated vaccinations. The cells providing us with normal immune function can be damaged by these vaccines, some drugs, and massive chemical exposure. The thymus gland that supplies these cells is also damaged. Antibiotics are famous for allergic skin reactions that can be difficult to resolve. Once a foreign substance enters the body, however the route, the possibility of an allergic reaction increases.

The Improper Cooking of Foods
There is good evidence that the longer a food cooks the more difficult it is to digest and metabolize. Foods cooked at high temperatures stay in the gut longer, making them more difficult to digest. We have been eating foods for centuries with certain chemical configurations. Foods heated past a certain point will change their chemical configuration so much that the body does not understand these new configurations. We do not have the enzymes to digest these new chemical structures easily. Processes that drive up the temperature to the point of change are deep-frying, pasteurization, barbecuing, and using a microwave.

Behavior Problems and Mental Disturbances
When Greece faced a starvation period during the Nazi occupation, there was a marked improvement in mental disorders among the population. Many of their favorite foods were unavailable such as wheat and other gluten-containing grains. The sensitivity to gluten is thought to be the link to some forms of

schizophrenia and paranoia in patients. Controlled fasting in the old U.S.S.R. was used to treat patients with schizophrenia and other mental and physical illnesses. This treatment for chronic schizophrenia was effective in more than 84% of the cases. If a food only partially breaks down, especially the protein from gluten (grains) and casein (dairy), the results could be the production of toxins in the gut. If absorbed into the blood and transported across the blood-brain barrier, these proteins could have an affect and produce behavioral abnormalities.

Over the last decade conditions have manifested such as Attention Deficit Disorder (with or without hyperactivity). This and other behavioral problems are epidemic in our children. Allergy problems such as asthma increase yearly in both frequency and severity. Cancers unrelated to smoking seem to be everywhere when compared to twenty years ago. Are these illnesses directly or indirectly the result of a toxic environment? Large segments of the population now seek alternative approaches for these problems, because the conventional drug-oriented medical system has few answers and may even contribute to the problem. Consult my book “Natural Treatments for ADD & Hyperactivity.”

Food-Chain Toxins
The chemical diets and drugs given to animals contribute to our sickness. When we eat animal products we also eat everything the animal consumes. Antibiotics or hormones used in raising and treating animals also end up in our foods. One allergy out-break was traced to the fish meal fed to pigs. The fish had been treated with several chemicals and antibiotics. The widespread use of these toxins in the food supply has increased faster than our bodies can handle the toxic load. A string bean grown in Mexican soil and contaminated with several pesticides can cause a much different reaction to our body than a green bean grown on an organic farm. Which green bean is being tested when you have allergy tests? Maybe this is a question you should ask your doctor.

Additives
There are people who complain about symptoms after taking nutritional supplements. It may be a particular additive, preservative, or chemical used in the manufacture of the product that is causing the adverse reaction. The waxes on vegetables and fruits make them attractive, but bother some people. The additives and preservatives in food are another factor. Until we decide to eat pure food and drink pure water there will always be hospitals filled to capacity. Unless we eat a proper diet, sickness is the result. Advertisements have brainwashed us about what to eat. It just means more money for the advertiser and less nutritional value to us. People are going to have to change their eating habits and demand pure foods, air, and water if they are going to stay healthy.

Mold, Dust, and Mites
Your house itself may be a source of allergies and sensitivities. Millions of sufferers have toxic or allergic substances in their home. Damp basements harbor mold. Bedroom mattresses and bedding are good places to find house dust mites, dust, and mold. Heavy curtains, upholstered furniture, and wall-to-wall carpeting are a haven for allergens. Don't overlook the family pet as a never-ending source of animal dander and all the allergens they might roll in if allowed outside. Some homes may contain enough insect particles to cause symptoms. Controlling your environment is important because avoiding or eliminating the allergen may be just enough to control most symptoms.

Why Do Sensitivities Vary?
Have you wondered how sensitivities can vary from day to day or month to month? That's because nutritional status, stress, and environmental factors all change constantly. This affects the immune response to any substance. A body that has a chronically stressed defense mechanism becomes increasingly susceptible. One of the most frustrating experiences is having repeated tests for allergies and they just keep changing. Now, you have to avoid or desensitize to these new ones; you never seem to get well, just change symptoms. It should make sense to eliminate the allergens found in food, chemicals, drugs, cosmetics, and other toxic exposures, but if you don't strengthen the body's immune system and digestive tract, there will be other allergies and sensitivities.