



A closer look at **Allergies** *a pesky problem*

By Jill Fraser Halkett - Clinical Nutritionist (Dip.Clin.Nutri.)

Allergic responses seem to be on the increase, and the symptoms that go with a bout of hayfever triggered by the neighbour's mowing service or a high pollen count are not to be sneezed at!



Jill Fraser Halkett is a qualified Clinical Nutritionist (Dip Clin Nutr, Australia), running a successful Nutrition Centre in Stanford where she consults in all aspects of science based nutrition supported by top class organic whole food supplementation. An established mail order business continues to expand from the centre where regular coaching classes in health, nutrition, weightloss and more are held. Jill travels

locally and around the country as well as overseas, giving talks on many health and nutrition topics. She has co-published a recipe book ('Nutritious') with Sally-Ann Creed, is on the Panel of Experts and a regular contributor to The South African Journal of Natural Medicine and other health publications. Jill has grown organic vegetables all her life and cares for her vibrant vegetable garden, 'Squirrel's Landing', which bursts with delicious organic fruit and vegetables all year round.

The subject of allergies is huge and many people believe conditions such as hayfever are caused by pollen and grass. Self-help remedies line the chemist and health food stores but do little more than momentarily relieve the symptoms. Trying to treat the coughing and wheezing rather than the underlying cause is a very limited solution to this pesky problem.

Do you know someone who constantly wipes their nose upwards? Some children frequently wipe their nose with the back of their arm and this is known as the 'allergic salute'. There could be a horizontal crease near the end of the nose caused by the constant pushing up action. The allergic face is usually puffy, especially under the eyes, often with dark circles which are called allergic shiners. Horizontal wrinkles run from the inner corner of the eyes. Corners of the lips are often cracked

while cheeks and lips are frequently scaly and dry. Bottom of the ears could be red and cracked and constantly wet eye lashes may stick together.

Pot bellies and a musty smell, can be prevalent in children who rhythmically bang their heads or move their legs at night. An uncontrollable, clumsy, disobedient, hyperactive problem child is usually suffering from food intolerance when all other obvious factors have been ruled out. Further symptoms include mood changes, depression, anxiety, dread, fear, sudden fatigue, abnormal sleepiness or activity, crying fits, bad temper, muscle weakness, headaches, blurred vision, joint or muscle stiffness, sudden itchiness, breathlessness, sweating, increased heart rate. Marked changes in handwriting and drawing after lunch break in children who were normally well-behaved before lunch. They may also be bed-wetters and susceptible to frequent ear infections or 'glue ear'. All these symptoms will invariably vanish after food intolerances are removed.

Extensive research over recent years indicates that the inclusion of dairy products, gluten-containing foods and/or many other types of foods may give rise to a large variety of clinical disorders, including:

- Chronic eczema
- Hayfever, bronchitis, asthma and other respiratory disorders
- Diarrhea
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Schizophrenia
- Depression
- Migraines



- ADHD

As long ago as 1977 a Lancet report showed good evidence that neonatal exposure to cow protein is associated with later development of childhood asthma and eczema. Of 46 children under the age of two with diarrhea, 33 had abnormal lining of the small intestine and 20 of these babies improved when cow's milk was eliminated from their diets.

Allergy Facts:

- In the UK 1 in 5 children have asthma, which is the leading cause of absenteeism.
- Corticosteroids can restrict growth in height by about 1 inch per year.
- True food allergies are fairly uncommon – about 4%.
- 35 million Americans have chronic sinusitis.
- Lactose intolerance is not an allergy - caused by a deficiency of the enzyme lactase.
- Sensitivity to triggers such as grass or pollen cause the same symptoms as food intolerances to lactose, wheat, gluten, eggs, etc.
- Allergic reactions can be caused from small amounts of an allergen. Even a teensy addition of 'flavouring' in the 'spice rub' you had at that fancy restaurant can cause a serious eczema flare-up. So-called 'flavouring' in processed foods is MSG in most cases.

Food allergies:

IgG (delayed allergic reaction) allergies occur 2-72 hours following the consumption of offending foods, most likely your favourite foods. So if you are very fond of bread or dairy products, these can cause an immune response which can end up with hayfever. Someone with a number of IgG allergies will more than likely have leaky gut, but when leaky gut is healed, the foods can be reintroduced later. Top suspects of underlying food sensitivities that cause these clinical disorders are wheat, milk, eggs and sugar. Colouring and preservatives (especially sulphites) also play a steady role in triggering attacks.

Diagnosing food allergies is a simple enough procedure.

Conscientious elimination and avoidance for at least six months and preferably a year, especially in young children should effectively fix the problem. True food allergies such as nut allergy and coeliac disease are serious and permanent conditions not to be confused with food allergies or sensitivities.

What next?

Once a diagnosis of a food allergy has been made through a blood test organized by a health professional, a supplement regime suited to the needs of the sufferer will be introduced. As allergic responses involve the immune system, responsibly targeted supplementation is essential during the recovery period. At the end of this article is a list of supplements that could be helpful at this time. The list is by no means complete. Interestingly, pollen, when taken as a supplement 4-8 weeks before hayfever season, can minimize symptom intensity. Pollen contains all the water-soluble vitamins, including B12, as well as E and K. Minerals, trace and hormonal elements and all the essential amino acids necessary for human survival are present in pollen.

Food Intolerances:

These are dose related. Some people are more sensitive than others. Symptoms include:

- Skin – itch, rash or swelling





- Airways – hayfever, asthma, otitis, frequent colds and infections, stuffy or runny nose.
- GIT – IBS, colic, bloating, diarrhea, vomiting, frequent mouth ulcers, reflux, bed-wetting, sticky poos.
- Central nervous system – migraine, headaches, depression, anxiety, lethargy, impaired memory and concentration, ADHD, irritability, panic attacks, inattention, restless legs, sleep disturbance, and more.

Diagnosing food intolerance:

Blood tests for food intolerances are available, but should be administered only by a qualified, scientifically trained nutritionist.

Another way to identify the aggravating food is through a procedure of elimination followed by careful dietary changes, which must also be done under the guidance of a qualified, scientifically trained nutritionist. Above all, food fads such as low-fat, food combining, eliminating animal foods, or blood group diets must be avoided. Some of these diets can be helpful over a short length of time, mostly because when first embarking on them, people eliminate the processed foods which caused the problem in the first place. But these fads are frankly dangerous in the long term. Especially for children, when they can become life-threatening.

To grow up with healthy bodies, children must have as varied a diet of fresh, preferably organic vegetables, fruits and animal products as possible. Foods such as fish (allergies to shell fish are not uncommon, but fish that swims around is usually safe), chicken, lamb and non-farmed game meats, legumes, lentils and some carefully chosen non-allergenic grains such as quinoa and millet are recommended. If any of these food groups is eliminated from a child's diet for a lengthy period, problems will arise later in life that may not be rectified.

Dairy products are not included in this list, and neither are processed foods such as wheat products, many of which contain additives that cause allergies. Of course some children are highly allergic to eggs or shell fish, so caution is essential while the allergy is eliminated over time.

Wheat allergies and processed foods

Wheat is one of the foods that most frequently causes people to become allergic. Often people feel tired, irritable or depressed while constant diseases, such as arthritis, eczema and psoriasis can be routine. Because wheat is everywhere in the modern diet, our bodies adapt and cope and people are mostly unaware of the offender causing their discomfort.

Quick Tip: The food you crave and eat most often is probably causing your allergy and discomfort. Remove all foods containing wheat, dairy or sugar for a fortnight and then reintroduce one of them to see if you get the same symptoms again.

Examples of wheat hidden in processed foods:

Baked beans, beer, biscuits, cereals, cheese sauces or spreads, crackers, durum, ice-cream and cones, pastas, mayonnaise, malted products, processed meats, salad dressings, stewed fruits, tomato sauce.

Helpful Supplements:

BarleyLife™, Proancynol™2000, AlMega®, Prepzymes™ and Florafood™

