

What are food sensitivities?

The difference between allergy (IgE) and sensitivity (IgG):



The symptoms of a food allergy occur quickly, usually within an hour of eating a food. The reaction is obvious and may be quite severe. True allergies are suspected to affect only a small percentage of the population, and symptoms usually involve swelling of the lips, throat, breathing difficulties, skin rashes, severe pain, vomiting or diarrhoea. This type of allergy is a specific immunological reaction which is detected by RAST testing (IgE).

Food sensitivities affect a large number of the population and can develop at any time during one's life. Food represents the largest antigenic challenge facing the immune system on a daily basis. Unlike food allergies, this Type III reaction, which involves the formation and deposition of antigen/antibody (Ag/Ab) complexes, may be delayed by hours, or even days after the exposure, making this diagnosis between food and symptoms more difficult to isolate.

How food sensitivity affects health?

Food represents possibly the largest antigenic challenge facing the immune system. The body appears to not completely digest foods which one is sensitive to, allowing partially digested food to enter the bloodstream, possibly due to increased gut permeability, where it is treated as a toxin and is targeted by the IgG antibodies. Therefore, if one is regularly eating foods to which they are sensitive, continual stress may be placed on the immune system. In these circumstances the immune and detoxification systems use their energy and reserves to fight food components, which are recognized as an invader/toxin.

Reactions to food sensitivities produce inflammatory mediators which can be involved in a host of chronic health problems. Some common examples are below.

Possible Symptoms Associated With Food Allergies

Digestive System: indigestion, nausea, vomiting, irritable bowel syndrome, diarrhea, constipation, gas, bloating, stomach ulcers, pruritus ani, cramping pain, and colic (in babies)

Urinary Tract: frequent urination, burning, and bedwetting in children

Cognitive and Psychological: mood swings, anxiety, depression, food cravings, poor concentration, fatigue, hyperactivity

Chest: asthma, irregular heart beats

Muscle and Joints: muscle aches, joint pain, joint inflammation (arthritis), some cases of rheumatoid arthritis

Other: water retention, weight gain, eczema, hives, rashes, excess perspiration