

A Conversation on Food Allergy Testing

by Carol Jamison ND



Recently Samantha, a 54 year old patient of mine, asked me “Do I need food allergy testing? I don’t have any digestion problems and I have always been able to eat whatever I want. I would like to be 20 pounds lighter and not wake up with joint pain every day, but what would that have to do with what I am eating?”

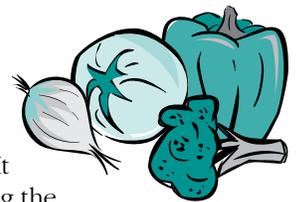
“Well, Samantha,” I said, “your weight and joint pain could have everything to do with what you are eating. There is an important connection between the foods that goes into your body and how you feel physically and mentally; it’s called the immune system. The simplest and most accurate way to determine what foods that may be triggering an immune response hours to days after you eat is called Delayed Food Sensitivity Testing.”

“How’s it done?” Samantha asked. “I don’t like the idea of having my body scratched.”

“You mean the Prick or Scratch method?” I said. “I am not a fan of that procedure either; fortunately there is a different type of testing. The test I suggest is a simple blood draw that takes only minutes. I then ship the sample to a certified testing facility and we get the results back in about three weeks. The test measures your immune sensitivity to over 100 foods and spices.”

Let me explain

It’s not a new idea that food has healing properties. A good diet, rich with colorful fruit, vegetables, meats and eggs free of hormones and chemicals along with plenty of water is the backbone to good health. Hippocrates wrote 2500 years ago, *Let thy food be thy medicine and thy medicine be thy food*. It is a newer idea that food unfortunately can be the enemy too. Why? There are many reasons including the quality of food we have in this country, the chemicals and pesticides used to enhance growth and preservation of foods, and the processing. Then there is genetic modification of most produce. Our diets tend to be very heavy in grains, corn and soy. Those are few of the reasons food is not that same as it was 2500 years ago. Don’t forget about the environmental pollutions we deal with daily, our chronic level of stress created by our fast pace world and our high use of sugar (100-150 pounds a year or 2-3 pounds a week per American) and alcohol. All of this translates in the body as inflammation, poor intestinal motility and integrity, inability to absorb nutrients, and poor elimination. Most people aren’t even aware of it.



Should I be tested?

Anyone with chronic disease, irritable bowel syndrome, severe depression, an unexplained illness or any type of nutrient deficiency should get tested. A *Journal of American Medical Association* (JAMA) article revealed that more than 75% of the money spent on health care is spent on chronic conditions. Many people ask, “Wouldn’t I know if a food was making me sick?” The answer is no. Unless you are having an immediate reaction after eating – symptoms of stomach cramps, diarrhea, skin rashes, hives, swelling, wheezing or life threatening anaphylactic reaction – you may have no idea your immune system is identifying a food particle as enemy and mounting a reaction.

Which test is right for me?

Let’s discuss these different types of immune reactions and therefore different types of food allergy/sensitivity testing. The situation I just described – the immediate onset reaction also called Type 1 immune reaction – is an IgE response. This is found in 2-5% of the population and more often in children. There seems to be a genetic component and thus would be classified as a true allergy. The scratch testing is looking for this IgE response.

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Food Allergy Testing

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According to Immuno Laboratories, a 26 year ongoing study reveals that 95% of the population has what is known as a Type 2 reaction an IgG response to common everyday foods. These are difficult to detect on your own because the reaction is delayed, anywhere from 12 to 48 hours after you have eaten the food. By the time you are feeling bad you may have eaten several different meals, making it difficult to identify the ingredients causing the issue. There are two other immunoglobulins you can test for IgA and IgM. These are less commonly used because these immunoglobulins, especially IgA are only present in high numbers in primary immune reactions in the first five to six days. I commonly test for IgG immune responses using the delayed food sensitivity test.

Delayed food reactions, reports U.S. Biotek laboratory, may occur in any organ or tissue in the body and have been linked to either causing and/or provoking over 100 allergic symptoms and well over 150 different medical diseases. As estimated 60-80 million Americans suffer from clinically significant food allergies and most all of whom suffer delayed symptoms.

Proof is in the pudding...Literally!

Samantha decided to take the Delayed Food Sensitivity Test. The test showed a high reaction to all the gluten containing grains (barley, wheat, oats and rye) and a medium reaction to egg yolk. I challenged Samantha to remove these foods entirely for at least three months to see what happens. Three months later she returned to my clinic a happy woman. She had lost seven pounds without trying, no longer experienced joint pain and found she did not have a swollen looking belly or swelling in her hands. In general her mood and energy were much better.



If you are considering allergy testing, look for a laboratory that is federally licensed and that has results that are reproducible. Cost can range from \$160 and up depending

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How Testing Helps

The following symptoms improve when the triggering foods are removed:

- ◆ ADD, ADHD
- ◆ Anger, anxiety
- ◆ Bloating
- ◆ Chronic fatigue
- ◆ Constant hunger
- ◆ Constipation, diarrhea
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Ear pain
- ◆ Food cravings
- ◆ Gastro esophageal reflux disease
- ◆ Gastrointestinal discomfort
- ◆ Headaches, migraines
- ◆ Joint & muscle pain
- ◆ Palpitations
- ◆ Post nasal drip, nasal congestion
- ◆ Weight issues



upon the complexity of the screening. Some labs can bill your insurance or cost will apply towards your deductible.

Four excellent laboratories for this sort of testing are: Neuroscience, Immuno Laboratories, U.S. Biotek, ALCAT World Wide. See references for their websites.

References:

1. Zavik, Jeffrey S. -"Toxic Food Syndrome", Immuno Laboratories CEO and founder.
2. Immuno Laboratories www.ImmunoLabs.com
3. Neurosciences www.neurorelief.com
4. ALCAT Worldwide www.alcat.com
5. U.S. Biotek www.usbiotek.com

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