

Natural Solutions

by Dr. Michael Smith

Editor's Note:

We're pleased to introduce a new columnist, Dr. Michael T. Smith, N.D., a naturopathic physician. Naturopathic physicians are trained as primary care physicians that focus on treating people instead of illnesses. Dr. Smith's approach includes using natural therapies such as nutrition, botanical medicine, homeopathy, acupuncture, physical medicine, hydrotherapy and counseling to help the body heal itself. In future issues, Dr. Smith will answer questions posed by readers. In this debut piece, he sheds light on the topic of food allergies from a naturopathic perspective.

Infants are first introduced to food through breast milk. Often times, signs of food allergies will show up early on in the form of a rash, colic, eczema or congestion. At the early ages, we first look to see what foods mom is ingesting. Conventional medicine frequently treats eczema with topical steroids. But because the cause is never dealt with, children can go on to develop other problems – asthma, chronic stomach issues, etc. – that all point back to the initial culprit: a food that is not agreeing with the individual. If a child is continually exposed to the food, it can lead to chronic ear infections, seasonal allergies, and asthma ... often times these are treated over and over with antibiotics that wipe out the “good” bacteria in the digestive tract, thus leaving the child more susceptible to other infections. It creates a vicious cycle.

Perhaps the most challenging task is identifying the food(s) causing the problems. In our practice, this is done one of two ways. The first is an elimination challenge diet, but most moms are not too fond of taking most foods out of their child's nutritional regime. The second is through a blood test where we test for IgEs (immediate responses to the allergen) and IgG's (delayed responses to the allergen). Homeopathic methods are exceptionally helpful in treating the food sensitivities (high IgG's) that can often cause headaches, fatigue, skin conditions and even behavioral problems. And, yes, I have many patients whose children have behavioral problems stemming from a food allergy, a cause that is easy to overlook.

By far, dairy products are the biggest culprits when it comes to food allergies. Cow's milk was not designed for humans; it was designed for calves! During the first and second year of a child's life, I suggest no dairy products. Afterwards, I never recommend cow's milk. Instead, try goat's milk, soy milk, oat milk, almond milk, rice milk or hemp milk.

As for my feelings on the large increase in food allergies over the years, I believe that it's our own fault for exposing kids too early to certain foods. You need to make sure their body is developed enough before inundating them with newness. We also tend to eat the same things over and over – soy and corn make up a huge percent of our diet! Factor in the processed/boxed foods and you'll find the same ingredients. When we eat the same foods time and again, our bodies develop sensitivity to it. As they say, variety is the spice of life. You need to eat a good number of *varying* fruits and vegetables daily.

Genetically modified foods are an unfortunate, unstoppable experiment. These foods are unlike anything that has ever existed before and it's difficult for our bodies to figure out how to process them. Additionally, we are constantly exposed to environmental toxins such as pesticides, plastics, herbicides, hormones and chemicals – all factors that could be behind the increase in food allergies.

The good news is that you *can* heal from food allergies. An examination can help provide an individualized plan to help the body heal itself. And for those who want to do what they can to avoid joining the growing number of cases, I offer these tips:

- Remove various foods from your diet and assess the changes.
- Take probiotics daily (they promote good digestive health).
- Add in a Glutamine supplement.
- Take fish oil (Omega-3s); these also act as an anti-inflammatory.
- Obtain a true assessment of your diet. Ideally it will include many fruits and vegetables and be free of processed foods. The “cleaner” the diet, the better.

Got a question for Dr. Smith? Email it to us at info@littleonesmagazine.com.

Supporting your child's health *naturally*



Our Naturopathic Physicians can help with Allergies, ADHD, Autism, Digestive Issues, Eczema, and more

704.708.4404



Call for your FREE health consultation
www.CarolinasNaturalHealth.com