

Allergies – the scourge of modern day living

Guide to testing for food intolerances

Article provided by Frances Ive

Allergies can come in different guises and can make our lives from uncomfortable to a living hell. Many allergies are caused by food intolerances so sufferers need to realize that help is at hand... in the form of food intolerance testing. A simple change in the diet can have the required effect.

In a survey commissioned by Allergy UK and carried out by the University of York it was found that three out of four people were suffering unnecessarily from food intolerances. After they had an intolerance test they cut out the foods that were causing them problems, and felt considerably better within three weeks.

Most of them (38 per cent) had gastro-intestinal problems, 13.7 per cent had skin problems, and the rest were respiratory, psychological, musculo-skeletal and random. The 5,286 men and women surveyed in the Testing Times study took the Yorktest 113 foodSCAN IgG (ELISA) blood test to identify their intolerances.

Not all allergies are to do with food – one of the best known allergens is pollen which accounts for thousands of people suffering hay fever in the spring and summer. They can also be the cause of asthma, eczema and irritable bowel syndrome. Symptoms include:

- runny nose
- upset stomach
- itchy eyes
- itchy skin and rashes
- bloated stomach and indigestion
- aches and pains
- painful sinuses
- headaches

Increase in allergies and intolerances

Every year 5 per cent more people including children develop allergies and this is believed to be due to the constant assault on our bodies by the environment – through pesticides in food, airborne pollution such as fumes

from cars, and chemicals in our homes. The immune system becomes so worn down fighting all the alien substances it is coming into contact with that it becomes increasingly intolerant of a variety of foods and other substances. Unfortunately the medical profession finds it hard to deal with allergies – there are not nearly enough allergy clinics in the UK to deal with the thousands of people who need them. More details on these clinics can be found on: www.bsaci.org/clinics

Typical Food Intolerance Tests

The Yorktest

The Yorktest FoodScan range contains three types of test:

- The First Step Food Intolerance Test will tell you 'yes' or 'no' if you have a food intolerance, and costs £9.99
- A FoodSCAN 113 Food Intolerance Test costs £265 tests for 113 food intolerances. The tests include a telephone consultation with a nutrition consultant, a year's membership of Allergy UK, plus extra advice and support materials.
- Vegetarian FoodSCAN Food Intolerance Test also costs £265 and includes the same as above, excluding meat products.

The 113 foodSCAN will provide you with all the information you need to start getting the best out of your health. The list of foods selected for this test covers the most commonly eaten foods in the UK.

All they need is a small sample of blood, which you can collect yourself at home. People taking the 113 foodSCAN have their sample analysed against specific foods and not groups of foods, and find the results easier to work with and obtain the best health improvements.

You will get a result for every single item on the list. The 'green' foods are the ones you can continue to eat normally. They do not appear to be causing your body to have an adverse reaction. The middle group, 'amber', displays the foods that you have shown a mild reaction to and should only be eaten once

every four or five days. The 'red' list contains all the foods which you react strongly to and try to eliminate from your diet – the scores are on a scale of +1 to +4 with +4 being the highest. The 'green' list is usually much bigger than the other lists!

Benefits of using the 113 foodSCAN service:

* Comprehensive Guidebook, 12-Week Diary and Motivation booklet in a folder to help you achieve the best results* Two telephone consultations with our qualified nutritionists, one of 30 minutes and one of 15 minutes with further consultations available for a fee* Priority results turnaround service* Handy results reminder card to keep in your purse or wallet

Case study:

Erica Hadley sat down to her first Christmas dinner in eight years knowing the food on her plate won't be making her ill. The 24-year old Barnsley girl was living, day-to-day with a chronic case of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) until a food intolerance test revealed turkey as one of the foods which were making her ill.

Sometimes it hurt so much it made me cry and I was in so much pain I couldn't even stand up,' said Erica. 'I couldn't go out, I didn't sleep and always felt exhausted from the moment I got up on a morning.'

From the age of 16, Erica went back and forth to her GP and was prescribed several different types of painkillers. He eventually referred her to a specialist gastroenterologist when she was 18 who conducted a colonoscopy – a camera to look at the bowel – and a barium enema. The test didn't show up anything and the specialist told Erica that there was nothing wrong with her. Erica was reluctant to believe this. 'I knew it couldn't be true,' said Erica. Erica tried a varied mix of other treatments in a bid to combat her condition. It wasn't until she was off sick from work and watching ITV's 'This Morning' programme that she heard a presenter talking of the food intolerance test and decided to give it a go.

'I didn't expect it to work but I sent off for the test and received the kit in the post containing a small pinprick lancet and a small container to collect the two drops of blood needed.'

Erica took the **YorkTest FoodScan** 113 home food intolerance test in November 2005. The results showed she was intolerant to wheat, gluten, milk, lamb, turkey, millet, peaches, white fish, cashews, coffee, cola nut, hops, sunflower seeds, tea and yeast.

Within three days of eliminating these foods from her diet, the constant pain had reduced by about 90%. Luckily, Erica had never drunk coffee or tea, but she loved chocolate, so found the first two weeks incredibly hard. She is back to normal now and the improvement has continued. Another unexpected benefit is that her skin is much clearer and she is sleeping brilliantly.

Erica considers the home food intolerance test to be the best thing she has ever spent money on. Erica said that it was difficult at first finding things she could eat, but this has got far easier over time as she realises that there are actually a lot of products available on the market for those with food intolerances.

For more information on allergies go to: www.allergyuk.org

Frances Ive is a journalist and author specializing in natural health and nutrition. Visit her excellent website www.healthysoul.co.uk