

# **Treating Allergies-A Different Approach**

*By Dr. Sandra Olic*

When treating seasonal allergies, conventional medicine will often treat symptoms with antihistamines. Naturopathic Physicians take a different approach, understanding that seasonal allergies are a hyper-response of immune function. The Naturopathic Physician asks why the immune system is overreacting and often the cause lies in digestion.

One man's food can literally another man's poison in some cases. When the lining of the intestinal tract is compromised, often due to excess levels of the hormone cortisol resulting from stress, toxins, coffee, alcohol and other substances, large food proteins can permeate this lining and enter the system. The body looks at these proteins and forms antibodies to attack them. Continually eating these foods causes inflammation in the body. The greater compromised this membrane is and the more often these foods are eaten, the greater the level of inflammation and activity of the immune system.

This is when the immune system begins to overreact and conditions result such as more benign things like allergies and joint pain to more severe autoimmune conditions such as colitis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Discovering your food sensitivities can be done with a simple elimination diet. The most common food allergens include wheat, dairy, eggs and soy. You can try to eliminate these foods for a few weeks and notice how you feel. If your congestion, headaches, skin condition improves, you are probably sensitive to one or more of those foods.

You can then slowly introduce one food at a time back into your diet every week. Pay careful attention to any return of symptoms, as this is your clue that you are sensitive to that food.

Some people feel that eliminating so many foods is too restrictive and there is also a special type of blood test that can detect specific antibodies to foods that your Naturopathic Physician will utilize. This test is quite comprehensive usually will test about 100 different foods.

During your elimination diet your Naturopathic Physician may prescribe certain supplements to help heal your digestive tract like probiotics, the amino acid L-Glutamine and soothing herbs and homeopathic remedies known for their healing abilities.

**Sandra Olic, NMD**

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**602.492.7875**

*\*This article should not replace medical care and you should always consult your healthcare provider*