

## Food Intolerance Basics

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Any good trainer should be able to quickly lead a client down a path of measurable and sustained progress. He will do this by ensuring the exercise type and intensity are perfect, and the nutritional intake is also suitable for the client's goals. Should a client not respond expected, food intolerance is one of the issues that should be investigated. Whilst it is rare that a trainer will also be able to offer allergy therapy themselves, some knowledge in this area is essential when dealing in these matters. The client needs to be left with a firm understanding of whether they exhibit symptoms of intolerance, what their options are for diagnosis and the difference between allergy and intolerance.

So, what is the difference between allergy and intolerance? Technically speaking, they are both labels that describe different levels of allergic reaction, and some institutions will use the allergy label to refer all to all allergic reactions. However, for most practitioners (including myself), 'allergy' refers to a *Type A allergic reactions*, mediated by IgE antibodies and involve the release of histamine – this results in an immediate reaction, including anaphylactic reactions. Examples of these Type A reactions include well-known issues like asthma, migraine, and eczema. Obviously, these are more noticeable reactions. 'Intolerance' is the term used to describe a *Type B allergic reactions*, mediated by IgG antibodies and do not involve histamine) are less obvious – they are delayed in their onset and tend to cause less specific complaints.

Allergies and intolerances are both different issues, but share many similarities. One similarity is that, historically, both have been a poorly-understood ailment affecting a very small proportion of the population, with the unexplained problems that tainted the lives of sufferers destined to remain exactly that. However, whilst habits resulting from our modern lifestyles mean that food intolerance is now rampant, mainstream treatment of sufferers remain hit-and-miss.

Diagnosis of food allergies have come some way since the not-so-distant days when the medical establishment insisted that allergy was a psychological condition. As a result, many allergy sufferers are able to enjoy symptom-free lives with the aid of prudent checks on food labels. However, the establishment consistently ignores patients who suffer from Food Intolerance – I do not criticize the NHS protocol for dealing with intolerances because it simply does not exist. The NHS stance recognises allergy, but not intolerance.

Food intolerance is raging. Stress, poor digestion and poor diet are the external influences most likely to trigger an allergic reaction. Stress leads to poor digestion, which leads to undigested larger food molecules getting into the bloodstream – the immune system then reacts to these foreign bodies which, if stressed, leads to over-production of antibodies to the 'invading' substance. This excessive number of antibodies will now cause an allergic reaction the next time the food is consumed. Modern lifestyles tend to dictate a regime

high in stress, poor digestion and poor diet, so much so that 70% of households now suffer with food intolerance. Most sufferers do not know that is the food they eat that causes them problems.

As mentioned previously, these problems are less specific, and can effect individuals in very different ways. A wheat intolerance could cause persistent colds, acne, chest pain and ringing in the ears for one person, yet could be to blame for excessive sweating, constipation and mouth ulcers in another. The most common symptoms that bring people to seek help are poor resistance to illness, constant tiredness and difficulty in losing weight. Many people suffering from intolerance may never know why they experience such trouble; many simply except it as a fact of life. It is wise to point out, at this point, that poor nutrition can cause any of the symptoms mentioned above (as well as those not mentioned), so consider both issues if you are seriously addressing your health.

Sufferers of intolerance need not endure such issues. Because an intolerance is simply an over-reaction of the immune system that compromises the body's functions, switching off this over-reaction alleviates the problems. This can be done by avoidance of the trigger (eg. the offending food), strengthening the immune system and administering the patient with desensitization solutions, which allow the body to adjust to the presence of the substance in the body without sparking an over-reaction. Having successfully treated the intolerance, it is very important that the pattern of behaviour that gave rise to the allergic condition is discontinued.

So what should an individual do if they suspect food intolerance? As tempting as it is, self-diagnosis is ill-advised; it is guesswork. The wise decision is to speak to an allergy therapist, who may test you in the following ways:

1. Skinprick testing – favoured by the NHS, injects diluted solutions of an allergen under the skin, tests for Food Allergies only. Its clinical use in hospitals often gives a false impression of its accuracy.
2. Muscle testing – tests muscle integrity after exposure to substances, favoured by the British Institute of Allergy and Environmental. Detects Allergies and Intolerance. Considered more accurate than other predictive tests as the actual reaction of the body is measured.
3. ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) test – a lab test that detects Food Intolerance only by checking blood for elevated counts of particular antibodies. Considered accurate to assessing food intolerance and a useful tool, if expensive.
4. Vega test – plugs patient into a machine to test reaction to particular allergens. Tests for Allergies and Intolerance. Accuracy varies in relation to the actual equipment and skill of the practitioner.
5. Elimination diet – exactly what it says on the tin, and the only 100% accurate test for intolerance. The proof is in the pudding!

OF course, diagnosis is only the first half of dealing with the problem. Following the appropriate treatment is very important – but creating the right environment to promote

health restoration is crucial. This is where good nutrition comes in. An augmented nutrition program must be introduced to encourage healing, with particular attention paid to the intestines (a lack of integrity in the intestinal wall goes hand in hand with allergic reaction). This would include plenty of essential oils, fibre, glutamine and zinc, together with a good generic vitamin/mineral intake.

As with all health issues, combining specific treatment for the issue involved together with addressing the total matter of well-being will always prove most effective and most efficient. The body is a synergistic unit, and operates when a natural balance is restored. In the case of allergic reactions, this means adding desensitization solutions, removing allergy triggers and causative habits, reducing immune system stress through fortification of the body through exercise and healthy living, and enhancing nutritional intake to maximise recovery and long-term welfare.

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