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**4 Reasons Why Allergies
Are Attacking
Our Health**

**How To Eat
Allergy Free**



**6 Tips
To Prevent
Food Allergies**

**Food
Sensitivities:
A Hidden Epidemic**

HomeCures *That Work*

Food Allergies

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Food allergies and food sensitivities are becoming epidemic. There are various theories on what causes food allergies, but one that stands out for me is the theory that when our guts are unhealthy, they do not properly digest foods and, consequently, certain foods make us sick.

Essentially, a damaged digestive tract triggers an immune system that starts to affect your health. Food allergies and sensitivities can cause arthritis, chronic fatigue syndrome and many other health problems or symptoms you might not associate with food.

Unfortunately, most of us don't know which foods we are allergic or sensitive to. The only real way to find out what you are allergic to is to follow an elimination diet. This is one of the oldest (and least expensive) techniques to restore your gut and health.

So, if you're "eating clean" but still find yourself having unexplained reactions such as bloating, hives, skin issues, IBS, and other challenges, then identify your food allergies or sensitivities. By avoiding food allergens, you can give your digestive tract the time and space to heal itself.

Most everyone alive today has several food sensitivities they are not aware of that could be hampering their health. Home Cures That Work will help you learn why food allergies and sensitivities often occur, how to test for them and how to eliminate problematic foods.

Hidden food allergies can devastate your health. But food sensitivities and even some food allergies can heal with time and a nourishing diet.

Eat without fear,

Cheryl Ravey
Editor, Home Cures That Work



6 Tips to Prevent Food Allergies

by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

“My itching is gone! I no longer have headaches! And, that rash disappeared!” Marilyn exclaimed very surprised. For three weeks she had been on an elimination diet for problems in her intestines and hadn’t expected her other symptoms to go away. She also stopped having bloating and pain in her stomach. As she started adding in foods, one thing showed up that she clearly reacted to: milk. Every time she ate anything with milk in it, including cheese, yogurt, and sauces, she got bloating and her itching and rash returned. Other things she thought she might be allergic to didn’t cause any reaction at all.

What Is A Food allergy?

Any allergy is an immune reaction. The immune system exists simply to keep those things that are “not you,” such as bacteria, viruses, and so forth, from harming you. So, the immune system only has to distinguish what is “you” from what is “not you.” If you have a protein that is “not you” inside of you, then the immune system will fight to get it out, causing inflammation, reactions, and all sorts of symptoms.

What Causes Food Allergies?

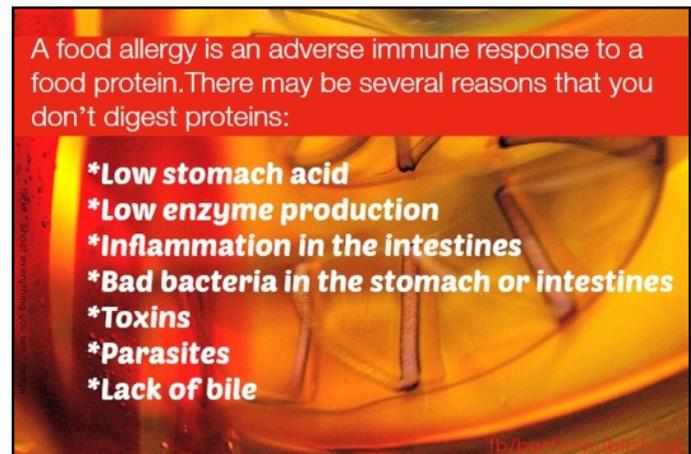
Food allergies are very common in western cultures. In traditional societies that eat their traditional foods, food allergies are rare. In a study in South Africa, the indigenous people were changed to a “western diet.” Normally, on their traditional diet they would have been protected from food allergies, but on the western diet they experienced a sharp rise in them.^[1]

Food is not part of you! You may think that you are what you eat, but in reality, you have to break down EVERYTHING into its component parts; every molecule is absorbed and used to build up

your own body. If your body can't break down your food properly, it cannot be absorbed and your immune system reacts to it.

A food allergy is an adverse immune response to a food protein. Proteins are long chains of amino acids that are wadded up into a ball. In the stomach, these proteins are opened up into their long chains ("denatured") so the enzymes in your stomach and intestines can cut them into individual amino acids. These amino acids are then absorbed and made into your very own protein. There may be several reasons that you don't digest proteins:

1. Low stomach acid
3. Low enzyme production
4. Inflammation in the intestines
5. Bad bacteria in the stomach or intestines
6. Toxins
7. Parasites
8. Lack of bile



Why Do People Get Allergies to Food?

When proteins aren't digested, they go into the intestines whole and the immune system says, "That's not me!" and start to fight against it. This can cause all sorts of problems depending on many factors, such as the type of protein, the type of reaction (there are four primary types of reactions) and the amount of protein.

So, a food allergy is just a normal immune response to the presence of a protein that isn't in the right place. If our digestive system functions as it should, then we will have few or no proteins getting into the intestines in whole form. They will all be broken-down into amino acids, which do NOT cause allergic reactions. Only the whole proteins can cause a reaction, and start the inflammation cycle.

The more inflammation you have in the intestines, the worse the digestive system works, allowing more proteins into the intestines, causing more reactions. This can continue throughout life. The inflammation can be felt anywhere in the body, from rashes on the skin to headaches.



What Are the Symptoms of Food Allergies?

This is a very difficult question to answer because it can be anything – or nothing! Many people (some experts think MOST) have no symptoms at all, but have inflammation inside their intestines without any noticeable problem. Other food allergy symptoms include:

- Gas
- Bloating
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Cramps
- Allergic rhinitis (nasal allergies)
- Sinus problems
- Rashes of all types (Eczema, Seborrhea, Psoriasis, Urticaria, and so forth)
- GERD (acid reflux)
- Abdominal pain
- Chest pain
- Dandruff
- Migraine Headaches
- Chronic cystitis (bladder pain)

The list goes on and on.

The University of Chicago Celiac Disease center explains the symptoms of just one type of food allergy, which may apply to any other as well:

There are hundreds of signs and symptoms of [food allergy], many of them subtle and seemingly unrelated. Yet many people with [food allergies] have no symptoms at all. In those cases, the undamaged part of their small intestine is able to absorb enough nutrients to prevent symptoms. However, people without symptoms are still at risk for some of the complications...[\[2\]](#)

What Are the Complications?

People with chronic inflammation in their intestines are more prone to many diseases – and not just of the intestines. Of course, they may have gas, bloating, diarrhea, cramps, GERD, and other signs of intestinal inflammation, but they may also have poor absorption of nutrients that lead to other, seemingly unrelated problems, such as:

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Neuropathy
- Thyroid problems
- Frequent infections
- Arthritis
- Fatigue
- Autoimmune diseases (Lupus)
- And many others

It also leads to a shortened lifespan, degeneration and decline in function. Thus, food sensitivities are common, and life-threatening, making them a very important problem!

Are There Any Tests to See if You Have Food Allergies?

Traditionally, skin testing using grids of many needles to inject tiny amounts of the food protein under the skin to see if it creates a reaction. Unfortunately, this is not an accurate way to measure the reaction to foods in the intestines. This method is about 50% reproducible; meaning if you do the same test again, you will get half of them the same – about like flipping a coin!

There are some new tests that are a little better, but have their own problems. For example, we can measure antibodies to various proteins; however, you may have a reaction to a different protein in the food! These are about 80% reproducible. There are some cellular tests that determine whether your white blood cells react to the food, but again these tests aren't consistent. So, what do we do?

I often use the antibody test to get us close, or to give us some clues as to what might be going on. Then we do the Elimination Diet, like Marilyn, above. She showed reactions to milk, wheat, and candida, so we eliminated them. (For candida, we do a yeast cleanse which eliminates simple sugars). The real test is to see if you have a reaction. For those who don't have any symptoms, it's very hard to do this because you aren't sure what you are looking for. However, I have had several people with chronic fatigue and really no other issues just eliminate everything except lamb broth and green leafy vegetables for three weeks who have felt much better.

After eliminating a food (or multiple foods) for three weeks, you can start adding them back into your diet one-by-one. Give only one day between them. Any reaction will be apparent within one day.

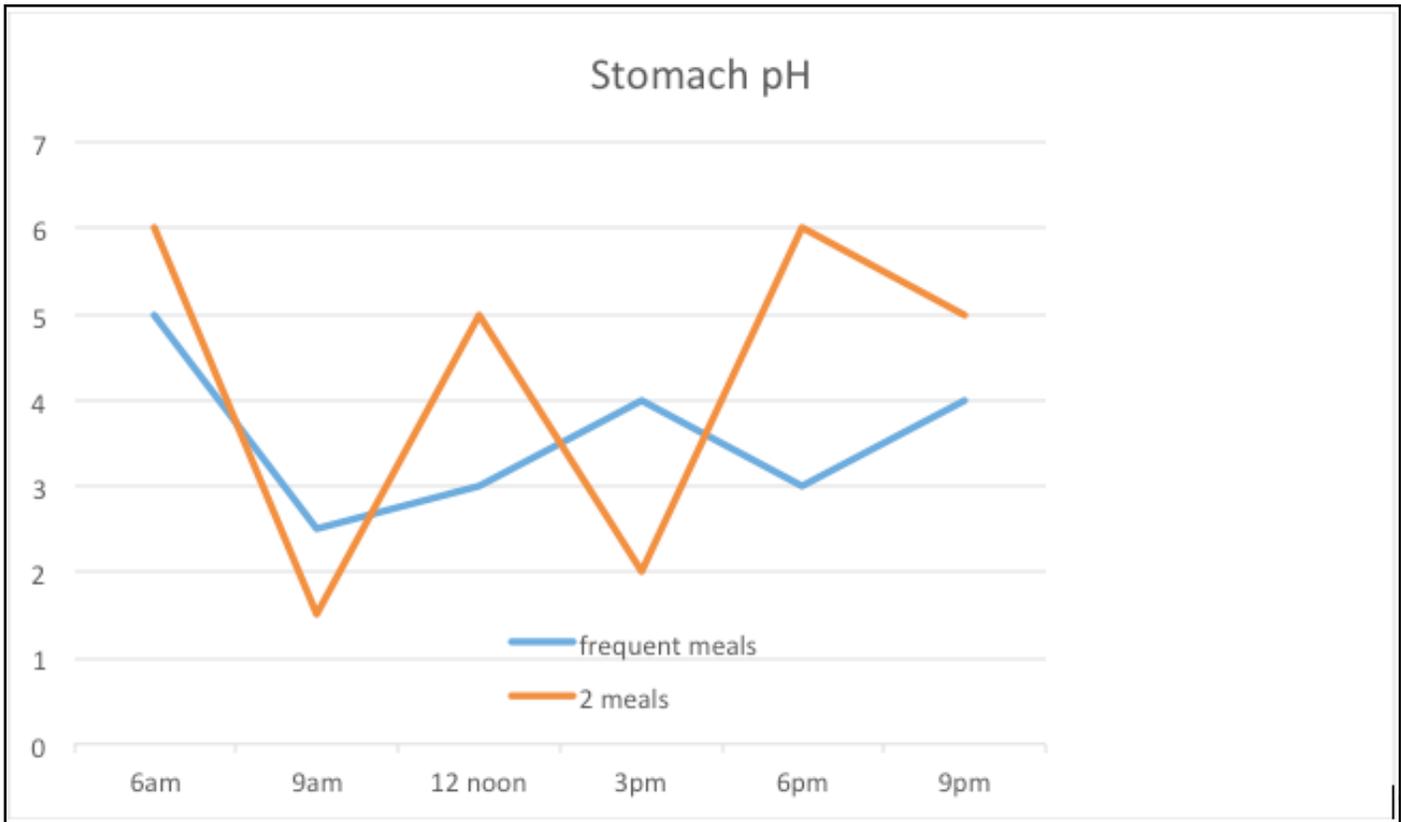
How Do I Prevent Allergies?

Prevention is the greatest thing you could do. If you could stop food allergies from happening, then it would protect your health in many different ways. Since you already know what causes the problem (poor digestion of protein), all we need to do is improve your digestion to digest protein well.

Remember, the acid in the stomach is important to denature the protein so the enzymes can break it down. Protecting your stomach acid is therefore foundational. This is done in several ways:

1. Keep your stomach empty as much as possible.

Nutritionists tell us that we always need to have something in our stomachs to keep our energy up. This, however, is bad advice for digestion. The “reset” button for stomach acid is an empty stomach and eating all the time creates a constant low level of acid. By always having food in the stomach, the pH doesn't get close to normal, nor does it get enough acid to denature some proteins. On the other hand, having an empty stomach allows it to “reset” the pH to normal and produce more acid to aid in digesting proteins when we do eat. This also prevents GERD, *H. pylori* infection, ulcers, and other stomach problems. (The pH of plain water is 7. More acid is a lower pH so if you have a pH of 1, that is very acidic and proteins will digest easier.)



This diagram demonstrates that your stomach's pH is restored to a higher level when the stomach is empty with only 2 meals a day, versus frequent meals throughout the day.

2. Avoid allergenic foods.

These include GMO foods, especially the ones that contain the BT toxin gene. This is a toxin found in corn and potatoes that can incorporate into your intestinal bacteria, giving you a constant supply of the toxin and causing immune stimulation.

The other main problem foods that are highly allergenic are wheat and milk. Wheat contains gluten that requires a very acidic stomach in order to digest it. Milk seems to be digestible until it is pasteurized, or heated, changing the proteins and making them more acid-stable and hard to digest. Raw milk would be an improvement.

3. Fast periodically.

Some of my patients do a weekly fast. One woman has chosen Monday to be her fast day because she found that she could continue to eat her preferred foods if she took a day off. She eats Sunday night, just drinks water on Monday, and then eats her normal breakfast on Tuesday morning. After many years of GERD and other stomach problems, she has been a whole year feeling normal. Remember, NOT eating is the way to reset the stomach. A day off is great for your health in so many ways by allowing more efficient digestion, better enzyme production, and better acid production.

4. Avoid sugar.

The addition of sweet foods is destructive to the digestion because all of the bad bacteria and yeast grow on sugar. Processed foods have been implicated in food allergies for many years, even though we may not have an allergy to the sugar itself. Sugar causes inflammation.

5. Eat fiber.

Beans, peas, lentils, fruit and vegetables all contain fiber that the good bacteria in your intestines make into substances that suppress inflammation.

6. Avoid the things you know you react to.

I shouldn't have to say this, but I do because I have had so many patients say, "I know I react to _____, but I like it!" Yet they continue to eat the thing they're allergic to. As long as you continue to eat what causes a reaction, you will not get better – remember the vicious cycle above.

RECAP:

1. Eat fewer meals
2. Avoid allergenic foods
3. Fast periodically
4. Avoid sugar
5. Eat fiber
6. Avoid the things that cause a reaction

Food allergies are not at all common in societies where they eat natural, unprocessed foods and don't eat too much. We are not destined to have food allergies because of our genes. We have a wonderful digestive system that is incredibly complex and works very well when treated properly.

If you do periodic maintenance on your car, changing the oil, checking the brakes, and so forth, then why not on an infinitely more complex machine – your body! Your digestive system is your primary interface with the world, bringing in all your energy and nutrients that you need to live, breathe, work, play, and do all that you do.

Keep it working properly and it will allow you to remain healthy for the rest of your life. It's not hard, and it's worth all the care we can give it.



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How to Eat Allergy Free

By Amanda Box, N.D

The phrase, “You are what you eat,” rings true for thousands, if not millions, of people.

- For some, gluten makes their joints ache.
- Eating soy from Chinese take-out leaves many with a bloated abdomen.
- Chemical additives in nearly every snack food give many people explosive migraines.

Your body becomes, or rather manifests, daily what you eat. You might not even realize the association; so many people live in such a constant state of discomfort, they don’t even remember what healthy feels like!

Food allergies and food sensitivities are a common culprit behind many of life’s discomforts, aches, and pains. Instead of addressing possible food allergies or intolerances, we often run to the doctor looking for a pill to fix what ails us. The problem with drugs is they rarely ever fix the root issue, which in this case is a food you’re eating.

Instead, prescriptions and OTC drugs attempt to mask symptoms... and many times don’t even work that well. Our society is constantly taking pills for symptoms of food allergies and intolerances! Just take a look at the drugs that can often be eliminated from someone’s regime just by excluding a particular food!

- Antacids
- Antidiarrheals
- Laxatives
- Anti-gas drugs
- Anti-inflammatories
- Pain killers

Many of these drugs are completely unnecessary once food allergies and sensitivities are identified and taken out of one's diet. Once again, the pathway to healing your body is through the foods we eat...and don't eat.

Identifying Food Allergies and Sensitivities

Like I mentioned earlier, many people have been in discomfort for so long that they don't know what normal feels like. Living with uncontrolled symptoms of food allergies or sensitivities includes suffering with:

- Digestive issues
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Joint pain
- Asthma
- Skin issues
- And more

These issues may ultimately stem from a food their body does not tolerate.<

Food allergies are a direct immune response by IgE antibodies in our body. If these antibodies spot a particular offending food protein in the blood, then they send the body into attack mode. Symptoms can range from tingling in the mouth to anaphylactic shock.

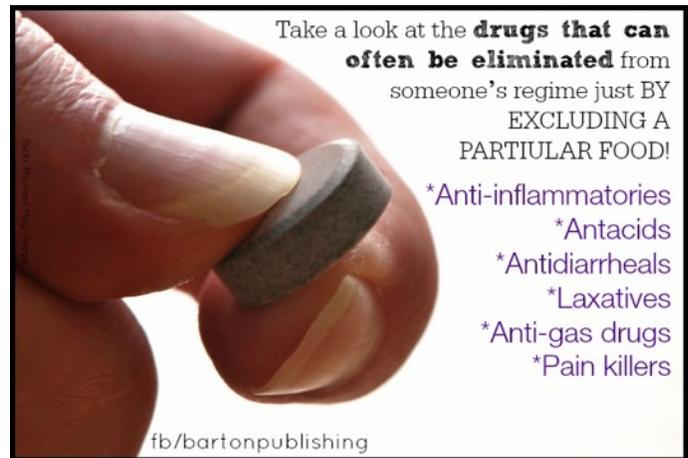
From a conventional approach, the focus on a healthy diet is maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding fatty foods, and counting calories. However, an alternative approach focuses not only on foods that contribute to a healthy weight, but also foods that are high in nutrition and, in this case, foods that are common culprits in food allergy or sensitivity reactions in the body.

A common principle in alternative medicine is that everyone's body is different. There is no one-size-fits-all healthy diet. What works well for one person, can be disruptive to another.

You see this principle in Ayurvedic medicine which divides people into Vata, Pitta, and Kapha types; Chinese medicine that divides people into Ying and Yang types; the Blood type diet which divides people into A, B, AB and O types; the nutritional typing diet that divides people into carbohydrate, protein, and mixed types; and the list goes on.

Food sensitivities and food allergies can be common among certain "types" of people. Differences in metabolism, blood type, and other genetic factors play a role in our body's response to different foods.

Food allergies are often a genetic trait and can be passed down through generations. Many times if a parent has an allergy, then their child may have the allergy, as well. Sometimes it may not



manifest as severely and because of this, can often go unnoticed. However, just because you don't go into anaphylactic shock when you eat peanuts, although your father does, doesn't mean you don't have a peanut allergy. Your symptoms may be more mild or atypical.

Many children who have asthma or skin issues, like eczema, have a food allergy. Food allergies can worsen with age and these children often grow into adults who struggle with autoimmune diseases and extreme digestive disorders from years of chronic inflammation. Often, these people have never thought to attribute their health problems to what they are eating.

Identifying possible food allergies starts by knowing the most common culprits. There are 8 foods that attribute to 90% of food allergies:

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts
- Milk
- Egg
- Wheat
- Soy
- Fish
- Shellfish

Food sensitivities, on the other hand, don't produce the severe immune reactions that food allergies can. Though some food sensitivities can manifest mild allergic responses, most are slower to react and are not life threatening.

However, food sensitivities are far more common than food allergies. I believe this is due partially to the rise in manufactured and lab created foods. Our bodies do not process these pseudo-foods like real all-natural foods. Lab created chemicals may be disguised as food, but our bodies keenly know the difference.

GMO foods have exacerbated food intolerances, as well. Genetically modified food products have proven to cause damage to the intestinal lining, cause imbalances in gut flora, and leave chemical residues in the body.^[1]

Though the following 5 foods make up the majority of food sensitivity cases, it is important to note that almost anything can be the culprit. Starting with an elimination diet is truly the best way to identify the true offender of the bloating, irritable bowel, migraines, headaches, runny nose and general "feeling under the weather" symptoms you may have been experiencing. Excluding these foods from your diet is the best tool for determining food intolerances and sensitivities.

1. Wheat (Gluten)

Gluten intolerance has recently got enough attention that it has become trendy to go "Gluten-Free." People are jumping on the bandwagon because gluten-free is now associated with being healthy. People just can't deny the fact that they feel much better when they remove gluten from their diet.

It is no wonder as it is estimated that nearly 1 out of 2 people may suffer with some level of gluten intolerance.^[2] This is a staggering statistic and may explain the rise in digestive disturbances, mental disorders like depression and anxiety, and attention disorders like ADD.

Gluten itself is very difficult to digest and can cause inflammation in the intestinal tract, regardless of a gluten allergy or sensitivity. Autoimmune diseases like Hashimoto's and diabetes can also result from gliadin, a gluten protein similar in structure to some of our body's tissues.

Most people have no idea that gluten is the culprit behind their health problems until they remove it from their diet. Removing gluten can result in surprisingly pleasant side-effects like weight loss or a reduction in pain. Thankfully, there are many gluten-free options now available at most grocery stores. However, I recommend staying away from gluten-free products that substitute with corn, as it is a high allergen food, as well.

2. Dairy

Even with the rise in gluten sensitivities, dairy still remains the most common of all food intolerances. Lactose intolerance occurs when there is a lack of the enzyme lactase, which leaves lactose sugar undigested. As a result, bacteria in the gut breaks down the lactose sugar instead, causing a plethora of digestive upsets. Although lactose intolerance is a common cause of dairy sensitivity, there are other contributors, as well.

The modern practices of pasteurization and homogenization may be contributing to dairy intolerance. Pasteurization kills the natural enzymes present in milk that help with digestion. Homogenization reduces molecules in milk to a size small enough to bypass digestion. These tiny protein molecules can end up in your bloodstream causing inflammation and increased mucus production.

- If you are dairy sensitive, then you may find that you can tolerate raw milk products because they are not pasteurized or homogenized.
- Oftentimes, cultured dairy like yogurt is better tolerated as well, because the fermentation process breaks down lactose sugar in the milk.
- Eliminating dairy is best with lactose sensitivity, but supplementing with an enzyme containing lactase can also be helpful when consuming dairy products.

3. Corn

Today's corn isn't what it used to be. Most corn is now genetically modified to produce it's own pesticides in order to create higher yields. Though this may seem like a valiant endeavor...

[Changing the natural genetic makeup of corn has made it less like a food and more like a poison. Click to Tweet.](#)

The pesticide that GMO corn produces called *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt, can cause allergic responses throughout the body along with a host of other potential health problems including anemia, high blood sugar, and cancer!^[3] It is likely this GMO corn is the reason behind the spike in corn sensitivities and other food sensitivities, as well. GMO foods can aggravate food sensitivities by causing damage to the intestinal wall and disrupting the bacterial balance in the gut.

Corn sensitivities can produce symptoms like:

- Foggy thinking
- Angry behavior
- Headaches
- And fatigue

It is hard to avoid corn because it hides in everything from ketchup to toothpaste. Look out for ingredients like high fructose corn syrup, corn oil (vegetable oil typically has corn oil), and maltodextrin. These are all corn products that people often overlook because they hide in the ingredient list.

4. Soy

Soy is another genetically modified food that causes food intolerance for many people. Soy is my #1 enemy because I suffer from severe soy sensitivity. I noticed this shortly after entering the world of natural health while drinking daily soy protein shakes. I personally suffered from extreme abdominal pain, gas, bloating, and constipation. Other symptoms of soy intolerance may include:

- Diarrhea
- Indigestion
- Skin rashes
- And headaches

Soy is a legume; therefore, it can accompany sensitivities to other legumes like beans and peanuts.

I personally don't believe soy is fit for human consumption and it is far from a health food. It is difficult to digest, blocks the absorption of important minerals, and has hormone-like qualities. Like corn, soy is in nearly everything. Reading ingredient lists is important in eliminating soy from your diet.

5. Eggs

Eggs, the egg whites in particular, are a common food sensitivity. Egg whites contain naturally occurring enzyme inhibitors that can actually block enzymes in our digestive tract from doing their job. Undigested protein from eggs can then cause:

- Digestive disturbances (nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting or diarrhea)
- Hives or eczema
- Itchy, red, watery eyes
- Wheezing, coughing, or runny nose
- Swelling of lips, tongue, or face)
- And can even leak through the gut and into the bloodstream inciting an immune response.

6. Food Additives

Food additives are used to sweeten, enhance flavor, brighten color, and extend the shelf life of nearly all processed and fast foods. Because these are not truly food, but lab manufactured chemicals, our bodies often react unpleasantly. The most common food additives include:

- Artificial Colors (Red #40 is the most allergenic)
- Artificial Flavors (MSG in particular)
- Artificial Sweeteners (aspartame, sucralose, saccharin)
- Preservatives (Nitrates, Nitrites, and Sulfides)

Many people suffer full-blown allergic reactions breaking out in hives or having asthma attacks upon ingesting different food additives. MSG is known to cause severe migraines and artificial sweeteners can even cause symptoms of MS! Even if you aren't having any outward physical reactions to these additives, I recommend eliminating them from your diet.

[Food additives can contribute to diseases like Alzheimer's and cancer, so staying away from them is always a wise choice.\[4\] Click to Tweet.](#)

The Elimination Diet

Following an elimination diet is the best way to identify which foods you may be allergic or sensitive to. Although allergy testing is available, it can often be unreliable and should always be followed with an elimination diet for confirmation. Food sensitivity testing is often inaccurate, as well. Following an elimination diet will take planning, time, and will power. However, its reliability is worth the time in identifying the root behind the discomfort you have been dealing with.

There are varying forms of the elimination diet; however, they all follow the same basic premise. In order to identify food allergies and sensitivities, you must follow this diet without cheating for 7-15 days! This is extremely important because during this time you will be cleansing the residues from the offending foods out of your body.

After the 7-15 day period, you will then begin adding back a new food every other day (if you have no reaction), and waiting a third day if you do react to a particular food. Keeping a food journal is very important. You must document how your body responds both when you begin the diet and when you start introducing foods back into your diet. Take note of things like:

- Energy level
- Digestive discomforts
- Frequency of bowel movements
- Skin texture
- Pain

Foods to avoid :

- Refined sugar
- Peanut oil, soybean oil, corn oil, vegetable oil
- Processed foods, commercially prepared condiments, food additives
- Fatty meats like beef, pork, & veal
- Alcohol and caffeinated beverages, chocolate & cocoa
- Yeast
- Soy & peanuts
- Citrus fruits
- Tomatoes, potatoes & corn
- All gluten, wheat, spelt, kamut, oats, rye, barley, malt
- All dairy products, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, milk, ice cream, creamer, whey & casein
- Modified food starch, corn starch, corn syrup
- Sulfites in dried fruits, balsamic vinegar, pickles, frozen fruit juices, olives, fresh shrimp, shredded coconut, canned foods

What to eat:

- Brown rice, quinoa, millet, buckwheat, tapioca, amaranth, teff (1/2 cup a day)
- All organic fresh fruit except citrus
- All organic fresh vegetables (except no corn and regular potatoes)
- Sweet potatoes & yams

- Organic poultry & fish
- Beans & legumes
- Nuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds
- Organic coconut oil, extra virgin olive oil
- Stevia
- Spices without additives, apple cider vinegar, rice vinegar, sea salt, black pepper, fresh crushed garlic
- Reverse osmosis water, club soda, plain rice milk (unsweetened), non-caffeinated herbal teas

Though your food choices may seem limited, there are ways to keep you satisfied. Below are a couple recipes you can use during the elimination diet. They are both delicious.

Turkey Meatballs with Zucchini Noodles

Meatballs:

- 1 small onion chopped
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp thyme
- 1 Tsp basil
- 1 Tsp sea salt
- 1 lb ground turkey

Directions: Preheat a skillet on medium heat and add 1 Tbsp of olive oil. Combine all the above ingredients in a bowl mixing well with your hands. Begin forming into balls and drop into the skillet. Turn the meatballs to brown on each side. Cook through and serve over noodles. Recipe below.

Zucchini Noodles:

Using a vegetable peeler, shred zucchini into noodle-like pieces. You can serve these noodles raw, or cook them in boiling water for 1 minute and then drain. Season noodles with salt and toss with olive oil. Even dessert can be delicious on an elimination diet! Below is a recipe for ice cream that has only 3 ingredients!



Strawberry Banana Ice cream

- 2 bananas, peeled & sliced
- 1 cup frozen organic strawberries
- ¼ Tsp vanilla extract

Directions: Spray a plate or baking sheet lightly with cooking spray. Place sliced bananas on one side of the baking sheet. Set in freezer until frozen. In a food processor or blender, blend the frozen bananas until smooth and creamy. Add strawberries and vanilla to blended bananas and process just until incorporated into the banana.

Serve immediately or place in a freezer-safe container and place in freezer until firm. If serving after freezing, remove from freezer 5-10 minutes before serving to allow ice cream to soften.

Identifying food allergies and sensitivities truly is the first step in the direction towards a normal, healthy life. The results will be more energy, better concentration, clearer skin, proper digestion and less pain. Don't let something you eat steal your life any longer! Take back your life and find relief by committing to the elimination diet and pinpointing food culprits that are negatively affecting your health.



Amanda Box is a Traditional Naturopath and a graduate of Clayton College of Natural Health. She's been in the health and wellness industry for over 12 years and currently practices naturopathic consulting in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Her passion is helping others achieve wellness of the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. If you don't have a good local naturopathic practitioner to turn to for your personal needs, Amanda does phone consultations! She can help you with weight loss, detox/cleansing, acute and chronic illnesses, skin and body care, grocery shopping, pantry overhauls, and more! Visit her blog "My Life in a Healthnut Shell" at: <http://amandabox.blogspot.com/>

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Food Sensitivities: A Hidden Epidemic

By Amanda Box, N.D.

Your body is trying to tell you something. It is screaming out in pain or discomfort, but you continue to misinterpret its cries for help. You blame your body as being dysfunctional and run-down. Perhaps you sought help and your doctor diagnosed you with one of these ailments:

- Heartburn
- Arthritis
- Colitis
- IBS
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Asthma
- ADD/ADHD

Unfortunately, you and your doctor may be blind to the association between what you're eating and what you are feeling. You may have the manifestations of your doctor's diagnosis, but underneath these manifestations lies the real culprit: a food sensitivity that is wreaking havoc on your body and your health.

Food sensitivities are nothing short of a silent epidemic. Both their elusiveness in manifestations and the fact that mainstream medicine rarely acknowledges their existence, leave many people without a remedy. Food sensitivities differ from food allergies and, unfortunately, there is no foolproof diagnostic tool available.

Identifying a food sensitivity is based primarily on symptoms, with a bit of trial and error. The plus side is that unlike food allergies, treatment is much more effective and far less harmful than pharmaceutical drugs that are designed to suppress symptoms. Food sensitivities can be CURED! Yes, that is right! If you're suffering from manifestations caused by hidden food sensitivity, you can get your life back!

Food Sensitivities vs. Food Allergies

Often the terms food sensitivity and food allergy get interchanged. It is important to know that these are two separate conditions and although they may share some similarities, they are not interchangeable. Distinguishing between a food sensitivity (also referred to as a food intolerance) and a food allergy is important in determining both the cause and treatment.

Food allergies are far less common than food sensitivities, but are typically much more serious. A food allergy can often be diagnosed via blood tests or a skin prick test. Diagnosis is important as many food allergies can be life threatening. If anaphylactic shock is triggered, then it can cause death in a matter of minutes without medical intervention.

In the case of food allergies, it often only takes a miniscule amount of the offending food in order to trigger the immune system. Symptoms are often immediate, although some less severe food allergies can have a delayed response. Severe diarrhea, vomiting, hives, swelling, and tingling inside the mouth are typical signs of a food allergy.

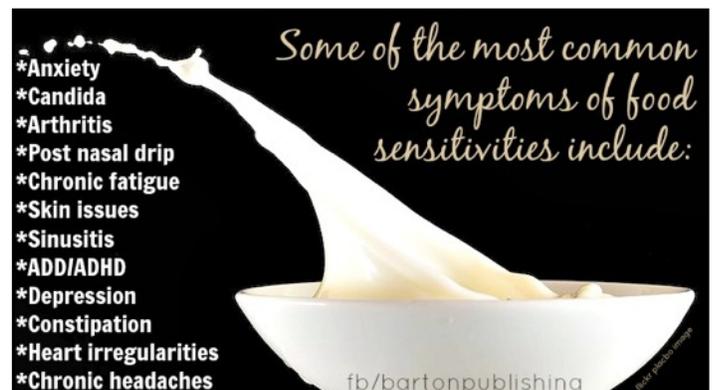
Food allergies are caused by a direct response by the immune system. Food sensitivities, on the other hand, can be either immune mediated or triggered by other means. For example, lactose intolerance is not a food allergy. It is an intolerance, or sensitivity, caused by a lack of the enzyme lactase in the body.

Food sensitivities are often not as volatile as food allergies. Sometimes a small amount of the offending food can be eaten without any manifestation of symptoms. However, most foods that cause food sensitivities are common foods that we eat daily, if not several times a day. Symptoms of food sensitivities are far more ambiguous than food allergies. This is because you cannot truly determine what part of your body is going to fall victim to a food sensitivity reaction.

Food Sensitivity Symptoms

The reason I call food sensitivities a hidden epidemic is because their manifestations can often look like other disorders. Food sensitivities, like food allergies, can cause severe digestive issues like bloating and diarrhea. However, food sensitivities have many other manifestations that you wouldn't typically attribute to food consumption.

Some of the most common symptoms of food sensitivities include:



- Tachycardia and other heart irregularities
- Skin issues (such as eczema, psoriasis, acne, or rashes)
- Sinusitis
- ADD/ADHD
- Depression
- Chronic fatigue
- Anxiety
- Candida
- Arthritis
- Constipation
- Post nasal drip or excess mucus
- Chronic headaches

This list goes on and it would literally take several pages if I listed all the possible symptoms of food sensitivities. This being said, you should never rule out a food sensitivity as the underlying root cause of an ailment. Before enduring invasive treatments, tests, and pharmaceutical drugs, take a good long look at what you eat. The remedy to your ailment could be as simple as eliminating a food from your diet!

So, how does a food sensitivity cause symptoms outside the confines of the gut? The majority of people with food sensitivities have something called "Leaky Gut Syndrome." Leaky gut syndrome can result from overuse of antibiotics, consumption of GMO foods, chronic stress, or inflammation.

When someone has leaky gut syndrome their intestinal wall has been damaged and become permeable, allowing food particles to pass through into the bloodstream. Therefore, with food sensitivities, the reaction you have isn't necessarily manifested in the gut as it is in intestinal diseases like Celiac, Crohn's, and ulcerative colitis. Leaky gut allows tiny food particles to float around in your body until they reach your brain or are detected by the immune system. Once your immune system is alerted, it causes an inflammatory response in your joints or elsewhere. Gliadin peptides from gluten are an example of how food outside the confines of the intestinal tract can affect our body. If gliadin peptides pass through the mucosal wall, then they can cause a variety of reactions throughout the body including:

- Thyroiditis
- ADD/ADHD
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Arthritis

Gliadin peptides can also stimulate opiate receptors in the brain stimulating an actual craving for more. Does this sound familiar? Most people with food sensitivities actually crave the food they are sensitive to and this is one of the reasons why!

At-Home Sensitivity Tests

Although there are companies that offer saliva or blood work for food sensitivity testing, these tests aren't always very accurate. They can often show a negative result when a food sensitivity is in fact

present. However, there is another method for testing sensitivity at home that is quite simple and will cost you absolutely nothing.

The Elimination Diet

Virtually any food can cause a sensitivity; however, there are several foods that are much more common food intolerances. It is best to begin by eliminating these foods all at once and introduce them back one at a time when testing for sensitivity.

Eliminate these foods for a minimum of 7-15 days:

1. All grains (exception is rice)
2. Dairy
3. Corn products
4. Legumes (soy, peanuts, all beans and lentils)
5. Eggs
6. Citrus fruits
7. Fats (exception is olive oil)
8. Sweeteners and sugars (exception is stevia)
9. Nuts
10. Caffeine
11. All processed foods (including processed meats like deli meat and bacon)

Your diet will primarily consist of vegetables, lean meats and fruit (no citrus). Planning ahead will be very important. However, following this diet is absolutely crucial in identifying possible food intolerances.

Testing:

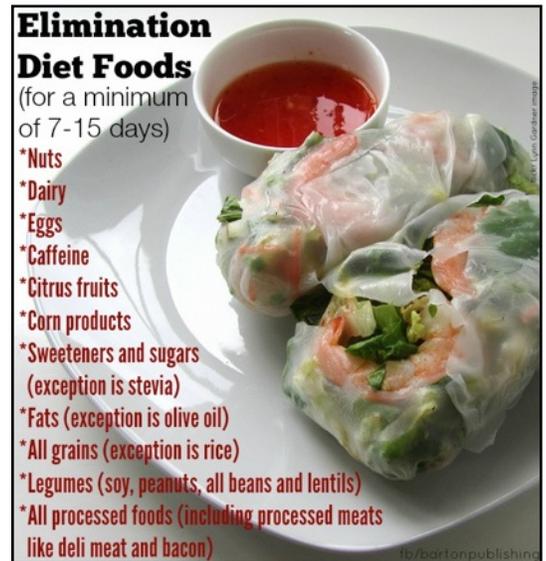
- After 7-15 days on the elimination diet, eat a moderate amount of 1 of the foods on an empty stomach.
- Take your pulse before eating the food and begin monitoring your pulse a couple minutes after consuming the food. Monitor your pulse over the next hour noting any increases that are more than just a couple beats per minute.

A noticeable rise in pulse is a sign of either a food sensitivity or allergy to this food! If you get a reaction, then wait 2 full days before testing another food. If no reaction occurs, then you can proceed with another food the following day.

Also, take note of any:

- Digestive disturbances (gas, bloating, constipation, diarrhea, indigestion)
- Pain (joints, muscles, back, neck, etc.)
- Declines in energy or alertness
- Changes in sleep patterns

These can be manifestations from a food sensitivity, too.



Reversing Food Sensitivities

Once you have identified any food intolerances, eliminate them completely from your diet. Although it may be difficult, the change in well-being will make it a rewarding sacrifice!

There are special diets designed to help heal the gut and eliminate food sensitivities. Following these diets allows healing and a sort of resetting of your body so that you can eat these foods again in the future! The most popular and I believe most effective diet is the GAPS protocol.

The GAPS diet consists of 3 principles, which are designed to heal a leaky gut lining preventing health issues from food sensitivities. This sealing of the gut allows food to stay in the intestinal tract where it belongs, not circulating out in the blood causing inflammation, pain, and discomfort.

The GAPS diet principles include:

1. Avoiding high sensitivity foods that can cause further damage to the gut and increase inflammatory responses throughout the body.
2. Repopulating the gut with friendly beneficial bacteria, including probiotics and cultured foods that aid digestion and provide the proper balance for health and healing.
3. Consuming gut healing foods and supplements like bone broth, gelatin, healthy fats, and probiotics which help put out the fires of inflammation and promote proper digestion.

People who adhere to the GAPS protocol can often resume eating foods that once caused problems within 6-18 months. This may seem like a long time to follow a restricted diet. However, it is important to remind yourself that you have much more life to live; living it free of pain and discomfort will be worth the months of hard work and diligence.

With a bit of internet searching, you will find a plethora of websites and blogs that are brimming with GAPS-friendly recipes and tips. [I recommend beginning your GAPS journey by purchasing Dr. Natasha McBride's book](#) so that you have an understanding of the science behind what you are embarking on. Knowing the “why” behind the “what” always helps when beginning something new. It can help to give you the courage and willpower it takes to achieve true healing.

Supplements for Food Sensitivities

Although diet is the only way to heal the intestinal tract and eliminate food sensitivities, there are supplements that can encourage healing and aid in digestion. These supplements are encouraged during the GAPS diet, but can also be taken outside a special diet plan to help with digestion and minimize discomfort.

Digestive Enzymes

Those with food sensitivities often lack the enzymes needed to break down food in the gut. Supplementing with enzymes during meals helps to replace these essential components to digestion. Taking an enzyme that contains HCl (Hydrochloric Acid) can be beneficial for those who are suffer from low stomach acid.

Inadequate stomach acid also contributes to poor digestion. [Twinlab Super Enzymes contain both digestive enzymes and HCl and are available here](#). Ox bile combined with digestive enzymes is very helpful for people who either have impaired liver function or gallbladder function. People who have

had their gallbladder removed, in particular, can see great improvements in digestion with the addition of Ox bile. [NOW's Super Enzymes contain both digestive enzymes and Ox bile and can be purchased here.](#)

L-Glutamine

The amino acid L-glutamine is important for soothing inflammation in the intestinal tract. It is also essential for rebuilding the mucosal lining that is typically damaged during leaky gut syndrome and other digestive disorders like Celiac disease.

The dosage of L-Glutamine is around 3 grams per day. [It is most economical to buy glutamine powder and mix with water.](#) Take on an empty stomach.

Probiotics

Probiotics, otherwise known as friendly bacteria, are necessary for digestion and combatting the overgrowth of damaging bacteria in the gut. Many times food sensitivities arise out of a lack of friendly bacteria. Antibiotics tend to be the cause behind imbalances of bacteria. This is because they kill off friendly bacteria in the gut, allowing the overgrowth of toxic microbes. Eating a cup of yogurt a day is far from adequate when treating food sensitivities and leaky gut. Only a powerful probiotic will be able to combat toxic bacteria and repopulate the digestive tract. I personally recommend the [Essential Formula's probiotic](#) or [Renew Life's 50 billion probiotic](#).

You may have been misunderstanding your body's signs and cry for help; but it is definitely not too late. By following a healing diet and supporting supplements, you can watch your symptoms dissolve before your eyes. The return is worth the effort. You'll feel years younger with better digestion, concentration, reduction of pain, increased energy, and a more positive mood. Don't let food intolerance hide any longer behind your health issues! Take the time to identify any potential food sensitivities, eliminate them from your diet and watch your entire life transform.



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4 Reasons Why Allergies Are Attacking Our Health

By Sarah Stanley

No doubt you know someone with allergies. It seems like everywhere we turn another child is suffering from a peanut, soy or dairy allergy, and one more person has suddenly become gluten intolerant. According to [Food Allergy](#), 15 million Americans suffer from allergies; 1 in 13 children (under the age of 18) suffers from allergies.

So, what is going on? Could there be a connection between our body, the food we eat and the products we use on a daily basis? You bet! Let's discover the 4 reasons why allergies, and food allergies in general, are increasing in number and most importantly, what we can do about them.

1) Antibiotics

Antibiotics are being prescribed at alarming rate; it's no wonder our poor bodies are reacting the way they are. Did you know that 80% of our immune system lives in our gut? Antibiotics not only kill the bad germs in our gut, but they kill the precious good germs, too. They weaken the immune system and make it harder for our bodies to fight infection, illness and yes, even all types of allergies.

One researcher, Gary Huffnagle, has linked the rise of antibiotics to the increase in asthma. While asthma can be linked to a number of causes (such as nutrition and dust), there is a correlation between diagnosing asthma and over-prescribing antibiotics. So as antibiotic use has increased, so has asthma. In fact, asthma has increased 160% in the last 20 years![\[1\]](#)

Another thing to remember is that prescription antibiotics only kill bacteria, but do not work for viral health ailments, including the common cold, flu and even ear infections.

What's even more alarming is that over-prescribing antibiotic drugs is causing an epidemic of antibiotic resistance. A [report from the CDC](#) stated,

“Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and at least 23,000 people die each year as a direct result of these infections. Many more people die from other conditions that were complicated by an antibiotic-resistant infection.”

This is indeed a cause for great concern.

Additionally, the [CDC](#) also states that antibiotics are a concern and parents should work with doctors to treat their children safely and effectively. Antibiotics do affect our health and could be one of the reasons why we are seeing a massive rise in allergies.

2) Anti-bacterial Products

You most likely used antibacterial products today. You probably think using antibacterial soap is a good thing killing all those germs, right? Well, not exactly. One of the main ingredients in antibacterial products is triclosan. It's also in many commercial beauty & skin care products.

Triclosan blocks the essential fatty acids in the bacterial cells, effectively killing the germs. Unfortunately, the bacteria that manage to survive the triclosan attack actually mutate into a new strain to resist this chemical. What's really interesting is what happens next.

How Stuff Works describes it like this:

“Some antibacterial agents go after the same physiology of bacteria that prescription [antibiotics](#) do. This means that if a particular strain of bacteria develops a resistance to an antibacterial agent in a household cleaner, it will also be resistant to similar attacks from prescription antibiotics. Microbiologists call this cross-resistance.”

Remember, germs aren't all bad! We need them to survive. However, the immune system needs to keep them in their proper place. It's how our body fights fevers, infections and illnesses.

What is the connection between anti-bacterial products and allergies? Glad you asked! From the time a baby is born, they are born into an environmental flora of all sorts of germs. These bacteria, yeasts, and viruses can be found everywhere from dirt to countertops; most of these microbes are harmless.

It's also important to note that this flora helps us digest food and fight off bad bacteria. Our body has two specific cells (T-H1 and T-H2),



which prevent us from dying if someone should sneeze near us or if we cut our toe. To work properly, T-H1 and T-H2 must come in contact with microbes and allergens. Your immune system coming in contact with the germs is how your body builds its defense so you don't die when someone coughs on you!

But sadly, our homes are filled with many antibacterial cleaners and soaps, giving our young children no defense to fight off disease and causing our precious little ones to be diagnosed with allergies. Sanitizing our homes, hands and world is not such a good thing and our health is taking a direct hit. Allergies are a direct result.

3) GMOs

It's not just prescription antibiotics that are causing many food allergies; it's also GMO antibiotics found in meat and dairy. With genetic modification (basically telling God that what He created is not good) happening all around us, our health is declining and allergies are increasing.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are organisms that have been changed using genetic engineering techniques. Some plants like corn have even been modified to produce their own pesticide. Because these have never been in the human food supply before, diseases and health problems are skyrocketing. From infertility to sterility, to allergies to cancer, the effects of GMOs are dangerous and very scary not just for humans but for the health of our earth, soil, plants, animals, air, and water.^[2]

[Organic Consumers](#) conducted a few tests on allergies and GMOs and this is what they found:

“Soy allergies soared by 50% in the UK, right after GM soy was introduced; GM soy also contains an unexpected allergen-type protein not found in natural soy; the level of one known soy allergen is as much as 7-times higher in cooked GM soy compared to non-GM soy.”

Bt toxin is the primary GMO antibiotic and used in corn, soy and potatoes. It is now known that the Bt toxin gene can insert itself from your food into your own gut bacteria, making you a Bt toxin factory. While the company that makes this has assured us that it isn't toxic to humans, recent studies indicate that Bt toxin can affect our red blood cells and immune system.^[3]

The hormones found in milk may also play a role with allergies. Robyn O'Brien, founder of Allergy Kids, writes:

“[rBST & rBGH] seems to be hazardous to the cows. The package itself warns of such bovine problems as ‘increases in cystic ovaries and disorders of the uterus’, ‘decreases in gestation length and birth weight of calves,’ and ‘increased risk of clinical mastitis.’ Mastitis is a painful type of udder infection that causes cows to pump out bacteria and pus along with milk, requiring treatment with antibiotics and other meds that can end up in the milk.”

And how much of this “milk” (if you can call it that!) is poured into glasses without much thought? More than I care to imagine. So not only are antibiotics being over prescribed, but we're drinking them on top of it. No wonder why we're in an allergy crisis!

Our bodies were not created to digest foreign genes, which ultimately alter our DNA!

4) Processed Food-like Products

How else is our food supply attacking our health? By hiding in processed, food-like products.

Now that you know a little bit about GMOs, you understand just how important it is to eat real (organic food). Processed products (generally known as Big Food) are filled with GMO ingredients: corn, HFCS (High Fructose Corn Syrup), soy, MSG, and countless other additives that don't have to be labeled as GMO ingredients.

Which brings us to ask this question, so what can we do to prevent allergies? Or if you currently have them, what can you do to help your body fight them?

Here Are 7 Anti-Allergy Tips to Remember

1) Eat organic food.

If you consume meats and dairy, choose organic. The best way to avoid GMOs is to always buy organic foods (and also look for the non-GMO label). Some raw milk drinkers have lower ranges of allergies and asthma.

2) Use regular soap (not anti-bacterial).

Also, avoid foaming soaps (even some natural ones contain toxic ingredients). [Dr. Bronner's](#) is a good choice.

3) Avoid any products that say "antibacterial" or "sanitizer" on them.

This includes all forms of hand sanitizer (gels, liquids, sprays, etc.). Again, [Dr. Bronner's](#) is a wonderful option.

4) Switch to eco-friendly household cleaners.

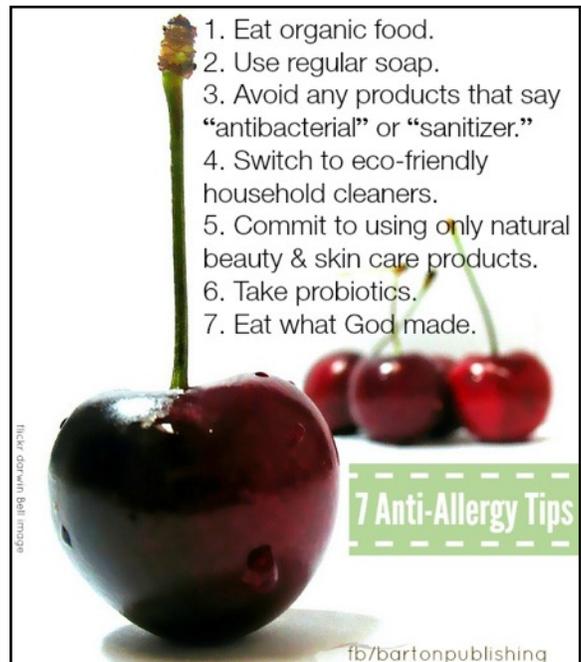
A few I recommend are [Eco-Me](#), [Seventh Generation](#), [Vermont Soap Company](#) and [Dr. Bronner's](#) has so many wonderful uses!

5) Commit to using only natural beauty & skin care products.

[Nourish Organics](#), [SKINourishment](#), and [Balanced Guru](#) are some of my personal favorites.

6) Take probiotics.

It's no surprise our immune system is under attack, so taking daily probiotics will help build a strong immune system! You can start the day with a [morning elixir](#) and eat plenty of pre & probiotic real foods such as kefir, raw sauerkraut (refrigerated, not shelf stable), kombucha,



spirulina or chlorella, blue-green algae, Bragg's Apple Cider Vinegar (important note: do not use commercial ACV).

Bananas, garlic, chicory root, dandelion greens (all in raw, organic form) are fantastic sources of prebiotics. [Garden of Life](#) has a complete line of digestive enzymes and probiotics.

7) Eat what God made.

Bottom line to take away, if God didn't make it, then don't eat it! This means avoiding not just food and drink, but also skin care and household cleaners. Be extra diligent about reading labels and if an ingredient doesn't make sense, avoid it.

Allergies of all kinds don't have to be a part our life and especially future generations to come. This is why prevention is so important! By being a little more relaxed about "germs" and more careful about we eat, drink, clean our homes with, and slather on our skin, allergies can be prevented.

The 7 tips above are a great place to get started in living a lifestyle of prevention. By being proactive with preventative measures, allergies might not plague you unnecessarily anymore! And future generations will thank you for preventing allergies for them.



Sarah Stanley is a wellness educator, endurance athlete, speaker, author, and founder of #wellnesschat & {wellprint}. Passionate about healthy living Sarah lives what she speaks about, practicing a whole foods, plant-based lifestyle that fuels her ultrarunning adventures. Her goal is to empower others to be knowledgeable about what they put in & on their body so they can live healthy, disease-free and happy life. She's been featured in SELF, SHAPE, Ladies' Home Journal and Washingtonian. Find Sarah on Twitter (@SarahStanley), G+ (+SarahStanley) and visit SarahStanleyInspired.com to start your wellness journey today!

[1] <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn5047-antibiotics-linked-to-huge-rise-in-allergies.html#.UoSBG61dXjN>

[2] http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_11361.cfm

[3] <http://www.gmoeveridence.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/JHTD-1-104.pdf>



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