

# Allergy-Addiction Reactions to Foods and Chemicals

Warren Levin, MD

A new concept for the medical profession, but one of great importance to the healing arts, is food allergy-addiction. Notice that I do not speak of allergy or addiction, nor of allergy and addiction, but rather of a single entity: allergy-addiction.

These two different aspects are as inseparable as heads and tails on a coin. Depending on which aspect is facing you, one or the other side may be more obvious, but the other side is always there.

Most of us are acquainted with the obvious food allergy reaction. The patient who breaks out from strawberries or who swells up from shellfish or who gets asthma from peanuts is well-known, and is recognized by the doctor or layman. However, this type of acute allergic reaction causes a very small percentage of health problems.

The acute reaction occurs from exposure to a food which is not eaten regularly. The reaction may affect one or several organs systems, but tends to affect the same systems in a particular patient with each repeated exposure. In other words, any organ in the body is capable of responding as the target organ. If the nose reacts, you get hay fever. If the lungs react, asthma. If the skin is the target organ, you get eczema or hives. If the intestinal tract is the responding organ, you get diarrhea or constipation or nausea and vomiting or gas or a combination.

## Allergy-Addiction Causes Mental Symptoms

One of the most important target organs that can respond to

the allergic insult is the brain. The brain can show localized areas of allergic reaction similar to hives on the skin.

Since the changes in circulation, the localized swelling, the increased pressure of this allergic reaction are all taking place in the unyielding confines of the skull, the symptoms and signs of brain allergy can be severe or mild and manifest themselves as any physical complaint.

The most common ones are headaches, fatigue, uncontrollable sleepiness at inappropriate times, inability to concentrate, memory lapse, incoordination, hallucination and changes in perception from any of the five senses – taste, smell, touch, sight and hearing.

There can even be convulsions and loss of consciousness. The most important factor to understand about cerebral allergic symptoms (and I should say that cerebral refers to the most complex portion of the human brain) is that these allergic symptoms can frequently mimic exactly the symptoms that have classically been attributed to nervous breakdown, neurosis or even psychosis. In other words, the diagnosis that it's all in your mind may really mean that it's all in your brain and caused by an allergic reaction in the brain.

The most obvious example of a food addict is the alcoholic. Suppose we look at the history of an alcoholic from the point of view of allergy-addiction. The first drink is almost always the social phenomenon. The drug affect of alcohol is experienced as pleasant

and unwinding, the relaxation effect. This may be repeated socially at irregular intervals for years without any addiction developing. Then perhaps after a tough day at the office the businessman may try a martini before supper to obtain the same relaxation (still from the drug affect of alcohol). When this becomes a habit the stage is set for addiction.

Food allergy-addiction develops slowly from frequent repeated exposures to a potentially addicting substance.

It is at this point that the addiction phenomenon becomes clear by revealing its major clinical sign – withdrawal symptoms. If you are addicted to something, you feel better when you consume it and, after a period of being without it, you begin to feel worse.

Depending on the severity of the addiction, it may be very mild and difficult to recognize. It can express itself as craving for the substance to which you're addicted.

Some people just know they are going to feel better if they have a cup of coffee. Others just know they can't get started unless they have their drink of orange juice. Still others don't even recognize it: they just think that it's perfectly logical to have bread with every meal. They don't consider a meal complete without some wheat. They don't realize the craving is part of an allergy-addiction to wheat.

## Allergy-Addiction Causes Withdrawal Symptoms

Let's look at our alcoholic again. Now he's taking a martini

regularly when he comes home from work to unwind, and very subtly and gradually he becomes addicted. Every day by suppertime his addiction is beginning to have its effect, and he relieves it by taking his customary drink.

When addiction becomes progressive, the length of time the offending substance relieves symptoms becomes less and less. Soon our harried businessman notices that somewhere around three-thirty or four o'clock he is really beginning to feel frazzled.

However, if he keeps a little bottle in the drawer and takes a nip about three or three-thirty he can avoid that "down" feeling, and of course it's an easy thing to do, and it's only two drinks a day, and another alcoholic is on the way.

The addiction increases, the withdrawal symptoms come sooner, and now we find that in order for him to function well he's got to have a drink when he goes out with the boys at lunchtime.

If he is still able to think clearly, he may skip the mid-afternoon nip from the drawer because he does not need that anymore, but if he is a slave to the drinking habit, he will continue to have that drink as well as the one before dinner.

It's important to notice that, at this time, this person is functioning better *with* the alcohol than he does without it. Even though alcohol is a total depressant to the nervous system, it interferes with reflex time and in general produces less efficient functioning.

For the person with an alcohol problem, the non-alcoholic state is no longer normal. It is a state of withdrawal from an addicting substance. The depression and malfunction that accompanies withdrawal is worse than the state in which the stimulation of the addicting substance is in effect.

Eventually, this person is drinking every few hours to avoid the withdrawal syndrome. He is functioning much below par, but he does function so long as he continues to drink alcohol.

However, now we see that this person, when he goes to bed at night, is going to go through an eight-hour period without the substance he has an allergy addiction to. When he wakes up in the morning he is going to be in severe withdrawal. This of course is the classical evidence of addiction to alcohol – the patient who wakes up in the morning hung-over, nervous and irritable, and all he has to do is take a tiny sip of his favorite alcohol and he relieves his withdrawal symptoms temporarily.

It is obvious to most people, except the alcoholic, that the best course of action is to go "cold turkey," to suffer through the withdrawal syndrome, to detoxify and then to avoid the offending addicting allergic substance so that optimum body function can be obtained.

The withdrawal phenomenon takes three to eight days for the food and chemical allergens. What has been further recognized is that once a patient has gone through this phenomenon and eliminated the allergic-addicting substances completely, his body then no longer craves them. At this point he often becomes aware of the next damaging exposure. This is helpful in the diagnosis and continual avoidance of food allergy-addiction reactions.

It is important to remember that any food can be addicting: wheat germ, liver, yeast, meat, fish, fruit, vegetables – are all capable of inducing allergy-addiction just as well as junk foods and alcohol. However it seems the more quickly a given food is absorbed from the intestinal tract,

the more likely it is to produce the allergy-addiction reaction.

### **Fastest Absorbed Foods Are Most Addictive**

Next in line to alcohol for speedy absorption from the intestinal tract are the refined carbohydrates like white sugar, white flour, corn syrup. With complex carbohydrates, absorption is slowed down by the presence of indigestible fiber and unrefined carbohydrate particles. The refining process eliminates these factors which retard absorption, resulting is the increased incidence of allergy-addiction.

The combination of these refined foods with alcohol is disastrous to the susceptible patient. Following the refined carbohydrates in speed of absorption are the natural carbohydrates, fruits, starchy vegetables and cereals, then the foods high in protein such as meat, fish, poultry and eggs and finally the slowest of all, the fats and oils.

The problem of identifying food allergy-addiction is primarily dependent upon the recognition of the possibility. It's the old story in medicine – if a doctor doesn't think of the allergy-addiction diagnosis during his contemplation of the patient, he will never make that diagnosis.

However, once the possibility has been considered, confirmation of the correct diagnosis and treatment are straightforward. In this case the diagnostic procedure is therapeutic because eliminating the offending substance from the diet will both demonstrate the allergy and relieve the patient.

Many patients are skeptical even when they feel better after having eliminated their offending substances. For the skeptics, confirmation is an easy and straightforward procedure – try

the food by itself and see what happens. Despite the fact this procedure sounds so easy, it is only easy in those situations in which the patient is allergic to one or a very few substances.

Unfortunately, some patients have multiple allergies of varying degrees to several foods. In such cases, eliminating just a few foods may not produce the desired relief. All the offending foods and chemicals need to be eliminated. It often takes longer than four or five days of avoiding the foods and chemicals that cause reactions to become free of all symptoms.

### **Fasting Unmasks Allergies**

It was in recognition of this complex problem that the technique of water only fasting was developed as a diagnostic and therapeutic approach by the pioneers in food allergy testing and environmental medicine.

It is interesting to note that after many years of divergent pathways to health, a number of different disciplines are finding they have much in common. The religious ascetic frequently fasted to cleanse his body of impurity while he meditated, and noted he was healthier in mind and body when he was through. Some doctors and naturopathic physicians have also advocated fasting as therapeutic and detoxifying.

Water only fasting eliminates all the foods causing delayed allergic reactions and allows the person to see the symptoms come back when the offending foods are reintroduced. However, it is more accurate and cost effective to use a specialized blood test to reveal the damaging foods and chemicals. And, unlike fasting, the blood test does no harm.

Eliminating delayed allergic reactions stops allergic inflamma-

tion, and this enables the body to begin healing itself.

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### **About the Author**

Warren M. Levin, MD, FAAFP, FAAEM, FACN, specializes in nutritional, preventive and orthomolecular medicine. He started using the Prime Test® for discovering delayed food and chemical allergies in 1990. Dr. Levin has been a family physician since 1959.

He is certified by four medical specialty boards: Environmental Medicine (the test and treatment of delayed food, chemical and airborne allergies, also called sensitivities or intolerances), Family Practice, Chelation Therapy, and Bariatric Medicine (weight control).

Dr. Levin is a fellow of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine; a member of the American Holistic Medical Association; a member of the American Academy of Medical Preventics, of which he was both Treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors; and a charter fellow of the Academy of Family Practice.

Other affiliations include: fellow, American College of Nutrition; Board of Governors, International College of Applied Nutrition; honorary fellow, International Academy of Preventive Medicine; Vice-President and Board of Trustees, American Society of Bariatric Physicians; and Executive Medical Board of the Medical Association for Research and Treatment of Arthritis.

In March 1995, Dr. Levin was awarded the Distinguished Pioneer in Alternative Medicine award by the Foundation for the Advancement of Innovative Medicine.

### **About the Prime Test®**

In the past, testing for delayed food and chemical allergies required patients to do a chemical-free, water-only fast for five or more days until they became free of their symptoms. Then they reintroduced the foods by eating only one at each meal, three a day, for three weeks to see which foods caused their symptoms.

Fasting and food-challenge testing made believers out of the patients when their symptoms left after fasting but returned after eating their offending foods. However, this approach often missed foods and chemicals they were allergic to. This testing method had added problems, the person had to spend a month in the hospital to test for only 63 foods and chemicals and was left with diminished health. In 1975, when done accurately in a specially cleaned hospital, it cost \$20,000. Today the cost would be much more.

The Prime Test® enables the laboratory technician to observe the damage to the white blood cells that is at the start of delayed allergic reactions, thereby discovering which foods are damaging the body. Up to 220 different foods and chemicals can be tested from a small blood sample.

Other tests for delayed allergies are not sensitive enough to discover the different types of delayed allergic reactions, and miss many foods and chemicals people need to discover to get well.

The Prime Test® enables people to find their compatible foods or chemicals without having to be exposed to the ones which damage their body and upset the brain. Also, the time and money spent by the patient is dramatically reduced. The Prime Test® often pays for itself within months. For more information, call Preventive Care Center, Inc. at 949 - 661- 4001.

## Shared Experiences

I have had asthma for 45 years. I was skin tested 15 years ago and had allergy shots for three years that were of little help. I decided to take the Prime Test and get counseled on a new way of eating. I have had no asthma for over two years.

During the first three days of my new eating plan I had very bad pulsating headaches and trouble sleeping. I started craving wheat. In one week I felt much better and had no asthma, and needed no asthma medication or cortisone. I ate more but lost swelling and weight.

I feel so good, alert, content, relaxed, more patient. I can think clearer and faster. Life is much more intense. My life has changed so much, my family and friends are astonished. So many people were interested, I brought the Prime Test and counseling to the people of Germany.

**Annette Moeller**, *entrepreneur, Munich, Germany, 1996*

I acquired a cough two days before I was released from the hospital. The nurses said it would go away in a couple of weeks. Five years later I was still coughing.

Since I was a teenager I had episodes of irregular heartbeats. My doctor said they were common and nothing to worry about. They used to last only a minute and happened every other month but recently I had two in one week and each lasted over an hour. I was totally debilitated. My new doctor recommended I take a drug the rest of my life that would leave me light-headed and with low energy. Or I could have heart surgery and receive an implant that would electrically control my heart.

Fortunately I had a new friend who kept talking to me about her health improvements from taking a special blood test for food allergies. She said both of my symptoms were ones often helped by discovering and removing offending foods. I thought she was nuts but, I noticed she was healthy and successful in her life.

I love to eat, and the thought of giving up a favorite food was uncomfortable, but not nearly so unsettling as always taking medication that made me feel bad, or having to have heart surgery.

I took the Prime Test and was counseled by Mark Lovendale. I am not disciplined enough to avoid the foods all the time that the test showed were a problem. However, I started noticing I could turn on or off my cough with the foods I ate. It was remarkable to me.

The next benefit was my heart fibrillations began occurring less often, and they lasted only minutes. I started logging what I had eaten, and sure enough, the attacks happened within 12 hours of my “cheating.”

My eating habits get better all the time because it’s easier to stay off my offending foods, and the benefits are so quickly experienced. I have actually gotten to a place where I don’t miss some of the foods I thought I could not live without. A wonderful side effect is I have lost some unwanted weight.

**Holly Reynolds**, *entrepreneur, San Clemente, CA, 1996*

I have been on your program for two months and I love the results! The dark circles under my eyes are fading, the bloating is gone and I feel great. I no longer get tired after meals and have lost the taste for many of the foods I am allergic to. My friends have even noticed a difference.

I have gone back and tried some of the foods the Prime Test reported were damaging for me. All of the symptoms came back which had disappeared after starting my new lifestyle. This reaffirmed for me that the Quality Longevity Program works.

When I first heard of the concept of delayed food allergies, I was skeptical but decided to stay open-minded. I was eating all the right foods according to government recommendations, while avoiding most fats and sugars and eating lots of fresh vegetables.

After reading about the kinds of symptoms caused by delayed food allergies, I realized I was having some of those symptoms but was attributing them to other causes like lack of sleep, premenstrual bloating and stress.

One thing which enrolled me into trying your program was how logical it is. Stop eating a food that kills your white blood cells and see if your symptoms go away. Also, I suffer from allergic reactions to medications that I took for years without reactions, and then one day they started making me sick. Repetitious consumption made me allergic to drugs, and the same thing had happened with foods. The foods I had eaten over and over as a child and craved as an adult were many of the ones I was allergic to.

It hasn’t always been easy to give up some of my damaging foods, but because I keep feeling better and because of the studies I have read that support your program, I am determined to keep using the Quality Longevity Program.

**Lesli Billinger**, *actress, Laguna Beach, CA, 1996*