

What is an allergy?

Featured Recipe



Sharon Gwozdek, RN, BSN

Happy 4th of July!



As we celebrate our Independence Day, let us never forget the principals on which this country was founded.

Read the Declaration of Independence.

Read the Constitution.

Be an informed citizen.



Greetings!

The volume of questions about allergies that we get sometimes seems overwhelming. The one question that we encounter most often is simply "What is an allergy?" Consequently, we thought this question should be the topic of a two part article. Part I "What is an allergy?" appearing in this newsletter and Part II, "What can be done about allergies?" in our September/October newsletter.

We believe that gaining additional insight into the world of allergies will help you become more aware of their causes and where possible avoid encounters with the allergens that precipitate them.

As always, we sincerely appreciate your comments and suggestions concerning our newsletter. We have enjoyed a good number of very positive comments.

Sincerely,

Sharon Gwozdek

S. Gwozdek

Sharon Gwozdek, RN, BSN
Editor

Featured Article ►►► ►►► What is an allergy?

Ask that question of Google, and you will get the same answer presented sixteen different ways. Ask a doctor and you will likely get a highly clinical explanation. Ask it of a friend or relative who has an allergy, and you will get a litany of symptoms descriptive of their misery. Most people think they know what an allergy is. And to a degree at some level they do. Virtually without exception, people will describe their allergies on a misery index from mild to severe. "My eyes and throat itch. I'm all stuffed-up. I can hardly breathe. I have ugly red welts on my ankles below the sock line. I ended up in the emergency room with a reaction to a bee sting". The list of symptoms can and will fill a book. These allergic reactions are brought on by our body's own immune system.

As children, our immune systems develop defenses against a variety of allergens like ragweed or sloughed-off skin cells from cats, dogs and horses for example. Some of us, however, did not develop defenses against these allergens and we suffer the consequent misery - some of us worse than others due to the total load on their immune systems by a host of multi-environmental factors.

The total load includes physical, environmental, emotional, and spiritual stressors:

- Physical stresses such as allergies to pollens, molds, dust, foods, etc.; poor nutrition and/or digestion; infections; excessive or lack of exercise/movement; hormonal imbalances; lack of quality sleep
- Environmental stressors are exposure to chemicals; living in a polluted "pocket of air"; polluted water; pesticides; heavy metal exposures; electromagnetic fields
- Emotional stresses which include our personal, home, and work lives and how we process the many challenges we face on a daily basis. Also included is our outlook on life. Is it positive or negative? Do we have issues in our lives, if not dealt in a healthy and positive manner, the tendency is to rely on self/health destructive means?

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Check Out Our
New Website!



Our new patient-centered website provides useful information about allergies, their causes and what can be done to effectively treat them. We invite you to pay us a visit. Go to.....

www.allergyenvironmental.com

Allergy & Environmental Treatment Center provides quality care to individuals suffering from a variety of debilitating symptoms associated with food, environmental and chemical allergies.

We offer state-of-the-art allergy testing and treatment. Schedule your visit with us today! Call 480-634-2985.



Allergy & Environmental Treatment Center:
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What is an allergy? (continued)

· Do we have a connection to a higher power? Is there a spiritual injury that contributes to emotional stress and physical symptoms?

Our body is beautifully designed to adapt to the many stressors imposed upon it, but as the total load increases, we begin to experience symptoms which may at times seem to be baffling to us as to the cause.

From the moment we are born, our immune systems provide natural defenses we inherited from our parents. As our immune system matures and reacts to our environment, it develops immunity to new allergens that are encountered. However, not all new allergens act as a catalyst to development of immunity. The result is an allergic reaction.

It is interesting to note that every year about 2 million kids end up in hospital emergency rooms for unexpected allergy symptoms or allergic reactions--and that's just in the United States!

Reasonable estimates are that our society has somewhat more than three times as many allergy patients as we had 40 years ago. Is this because we keep better records? Or, is there something else at work. Studies do suggest that allergies are on the rise. However, it is not clearly understood why this is the case. Some researchers have suggested that our immune systems are being slowly altered by exposure to chemical compounds that find their way into our environment.

So then, just what is an allergy? A straightforward definition states that it is a condition of hypersensitivity to a substance (an allergen) considered harmless to most people. That seems simple enough. However, as we shall see, the process is a bit more complex and finding a cure or relief from symptoms takes some medical detective work.

Exposure (to an allergen) can be through consumption, inhalation, physical contact, or by injection. Examples of these would include peanuts (consumption, food allergy), pollen (inhalation, hay fever), latex (contact, gloves, socks), and venom (injection, snake bite, bee sting). Symptoms range from mild to life-threatening.

What's at work here is an immune system that is responding inappropriately to substances that in most people illicit no response at all.

More than any other body system, the immune system's very sophisticated process is designed to protect you from foreign substances and destroy pathogenic organisms. We will explore its role and function in Part II of this article in our next newsletter.



There is nothing more
American than burgers at
a cookout!

Bon Appetit!

Veggie Burgers

Try these delicious burgers at your next cookout!

Ingredients:

- Brown or white rice - cooked
- Shredded zucchini and/or yellow squash
- Crushed tomato
- White or sweet potato cooked (smashed to help hold shape or burger).
- 1 tablespoon oil (olive, canola, flax or sunflower) - season with garlic

Optional:

1. Onions
2. Alfalfa sprouts
3. Shredded carrots
4. Spinach
5. Avocado
6. Celery

Directions:

1. Blend well and make patties.
2. Place on no stick pan.
3. Bake at 350° - 375° until cooked to desired consistency.

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Sincerely,

Sharon Gwozdek, R.N., B.S.N
Allergy & Environmental Treatment Center