

Allergies and Intolerances:

What is the Story Behind Allergies?

Food allergy has become quite a problem and is rapidly becoming a great concern of many people. Adverse reactions to foods whose pathogenesis involves an immunological response to food components are called food hypersensitivity reactions or "food allergy."

Why has the incidence of allergy risen so dramatically?

Many modern foods, as well as medicinal drugs such as penicillin, also contain preservatives, stabilizers, artificial colourings, and flavourings. Some scientists believe that increased chemical pollution in our air, water, and food is to blame. Foods can easily become contaminated by the use of insecticides in farming.

The multifactorial causes currently under investigation include: genetic atopic predisposition, allergen exposure and sensitization in early childhood, viral respiratory tract infections in young children, smoking during pregnancy, poor quality diet, reduced breast-feeding, childhood obesity, immunologic predisposition (Th2-prone), environmental pollution, and childhood immunization.

Other possible reasons for increased food hypersensitivity include genetic manipulation of plants, resulting in food components which cross-react with normal tissues; less diversity in the diet, cultural differences and route of exposure. The way in which we process and cook foods along with our individual digestive capacity can also increase food hypersensitivities.

Adverse reactions to food should be classified as **food allergy, food sensitivity, or food intolerance.**

Do you have food allergies?

Are you gluten/dairy intolerant?

Do you suspect you are intolerant to a specific food?