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## *The Care Group, P.C.*

### **Could Your Food Be Making You Sick?**

By Gerard L. Guillory, M.D.

For five years, Susan Saint Vincent woke up each morning feeling as if she had the flu.

“I had chronic diarrhea and I spent hours in the bathroom every day,” she says. “Nothing I ate was being absorbed by my body and I lost—at one point—20 pounds. I went to four or five doctors and I was scoped, tested and tested again.”

The results were inconclusive, and symptoms persisted, making Susan’s life increasingly difficult. “I was depressed and scared,” she says. “I had no idea what was going on.”

It wasn’t until recently that Susan found out what was wrong. She is one of countless Americans who have food allergies that evade traditional methods of detection.

Most people think of allergies in terms of hay fever, where symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing, itchy eyes and wheezing are triggered by airborne or inhalant allergens. But there is a growing body of evidence that suggests that many chronic illnesses are the result of reactions to common foods. These reactions occur when the body—as in Susan’s case—mistakenly identifies a normally harmless food as a foreign invader (bacteria or virus). The body’s main line of defense against these foreign invaders is the production of antibodies.

There are numerous kinds of antibodies, referred to as immunoglobulins, but conventional food-allergy testing looks only for the class of immunoglobulins called IgE. IgE-mediated allergic reactions are often obvious and dramatic and include such symptoms as wheezing, hives, cough, tightening of the throat, abdominal cramps and diarrhea. These reactions usually occur immediately after the food is consumed.

Recent research has identified a separate class of IgG antibody reactions to food as a basis for many chronic, disabling conditions. Symptoms may be delayed, occurring days after an offending food is eaten. Because of these delays, identifying the specific cause of the reaction is more difficult.

And that was Susan’s problem. She had undergone traditional testing for food allergies but it wasn’t until she underwent testing for *delayed* food allergies that the cause of her symptoms was pinpointed.

Patients experiencing delayed reactions to food may experience chronic fatigue, headaches, digestive problems, skin rashes and various autoimmune disorders (rheumatoid, lupus, psoriasis). Immunological reactions within the gut make the gut more sensitive to other ingested substances, causing an indirect effect.

IgG antibodies are produced by a certain type of white blood cells referred to as lymphocytes, arising from gut-associated lymphoid tissues (GALT) found in the lining of the intestinal tract. Once activated, the immune system begins to attack these innocuous proteins, which are found in certain foods. In the process, the integrity of the intestinal lining becomes compromised.

The intestinal lining, which is normally a selective filter, now allows larger particles found in the gut to be absorbed into the bloodstream, further activating the immune system. This cascade of events creates a state of chronic inflammation and chronic debility.

The evidence for IgG antibody reactions as a basis for many chronic diseases continues to grow and it is now possible to test for specific IgG-mediated reactions to common foods.

The foods mostly commonly associated with such reactions include milk, eggs, wheat or gluten, nuts, soy and some meats. For Susan, the list of offending foods turned out to be unusually lengthy and included bananas, cane sugar, vanilla, eggs, dairy products and several other items.

To identify allergy-causing foods, we take a routine blood sample from the patient and send it to US Biotek Laboratories, Inc., in Seattle, Wash.—the same lab that identified Susan’s allergies. US Biotek breaks the sample into dozens of smaller samples and introduces a specific food substance into each. If an unusually high IgG antibody reaction results, the food is considered a suspect. The US Biotek Website ([www.usbiotek.com](http://www.usbiotek.com)) provides details about the methodology and results.

Once we receive results from the lab, we can help the patient develop a new diet and monitor progress, to ensure that we have correctly identified the problem.

Since beginning IgG antibody testing at The Care Group, we have had tremendous success in identifying foods that are triggering symptoms. More than 70 percent of these symptoms have been improved or eliminated in patients by avoiding these foods.

After her test in May 2007, Susan changed her diet immediately. Within a week, her symptoms disappeared. “I get up in the morning now and I can’t believe how good I feel,” she says.

If you suspect that you have food allergies, please call The Care Group for an appointment. We might be able to help you get your life back.

For personal chef services please visit <http://www.gfoodconcepts.com/>

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