

# The hidden problem of food intolerance

Doctors rarely explore the link between food intolerance and chronic conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), migraines, eczema and fatigue, but there is growing evidence that what we eat and drink produces a reaction in the body, and that a change in diet might be the way forward. But how do you find out?

Intolerances to foods are very common, with up to 45% of the population suffering, and are associated with a range of chronic symptoms, including headaches, intestinal and skin symptoms. It's usually pretty obvious if you suffer a full-blown allergic reaction to a food, such as nuts or shellfish, but the effects of food sensitivity are a lot more subtle and much less well understood. Tests for allergies are sometimes carried out, but testing for food intolerance, which is less easy to diagnose, is frequently overlooked.

Currently, the best accepted method for confirming food sensitivities is by something called an elimination diet, where the patient eats a restricted diet for several weeks. If there is no improvement during this time, it is assumed that the food type that has been restricted is not causing the symptoms, and the process is repeated with another food type. This can all be very time consuming, and because it is impossible to test all the different combinations of food types that may be causing the problems, is not particularly effective.

Every individual person is unique, with a different biochemical make-up, so while cow's milk, nuts and yeast may be responsible for Eleanor's eczema, they might be fine for Gemma to eat – who also has eczema. Eggs, strawberries and lentils may contribute to John's IBS, but fine for George to eat, even though he regularly suffers from bloating and diarrhea.

The most scientific approach to food intolerance testing is a blood test that measures food-specific IgG antibodies. Antibodies are produced naturally by the body to identify and neutralise foreign objects such as bacteria and viruses, so antibodies to foods are created when the immune system identifies a particular food type as "foreign". Measuring IgG antibodies to foods in blood identifies which particular food the body is fighting, so removing that food from someone's diet can reduce ill-health symptoms.

Many patients with chronic conditions would rather have a dietary solution to their problem than have to take medication, and this has obvious

economic benefits as well. It is a pity that the use of this method to improve symptoms using a targeted elimination diet process is not recognised more fully.

## foodSCAN

There is only one food-specific IgG test available, the YORKTEST foodSCAN, that has significant clinical data to support its use. YORKTEST has 25 years of experience in the food intolerance testing market and has widely published test data to show that, in those with chronic symptoms, over three out of four will benefit significantly if they remove the foods that show a reaction in the foodSCAN test. The test only requires a few drops of blood.

**i** YORKTEST Laboratories has a First Step food intolerance test to identify raised levels of IgG antibodies. For further details, visit [www.yorktest.ie](http://www.yorktest.ie) or call 01 202 2701.



You could be picking up more than you bargained for at the supermarket.

Health problems can be aggravated by many foods, even those generally considered good for you. YORKTEST could help you understand the effects of food intolerance with foodSCAN. It's Ireland's only scientifically proven food intolerance test – a simple blood test that identifies intolerances in 113 foods. Not only will you have the results within ten days, our service includes two follow-up appointments with a BANT\*-qualified nutritionist. We'll be there every step of the way, offering support and practical advice, like what to leave off your shopping list.

**YORKTEST**<sup>®</sup>  
**foodSCAN**<sup>®</sup>  
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