

Clinical Nutrition & Food

Allergies

One of our strongest assets as clinicians is the ability to help people heal themselves and prevent chronic disease by making dietary changes when necessary. We know that our health is directly tied to the foods we eat. Unfortunately, many people are either too busy or lack the proper nutrition education to select the foods that will prevent chronic disease, depression and fatigue. Each person's body is different and a food which may be okay for one person's system may wreak havoc on another's. In addition, sometimes a food which formerly seemed fine can suddenly no longer work with the system. It is not uncommon for a person to "outgrow" a tolerance for a certain food. Our diets are so variable that sometimes the offending food is not obvious. At RiverPark Chiropractic, our clinical approach makes it easier to solve the mystery of what foods may be stressing our systems or what nutrients we may be lacking.

• Food Allergy vs. Food Intolerance

A food allergy is an immune system response to a specific food. Food allergies generally cause sudden, acute reactions such as hives, shortness of breath, or chest pain, and in extreme cases, anaphylaxis.

A food intolerance is when the body cannot properly digest a food, leading to symptoms such as eczema, nasal congestion, abdominal pain (gas, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting), heartburn, headaches irritability and fatigue.

Only about 3 to 4 percent of adults have an actual food allergy, but a larger number of people are affected by food intolerance. Other conditions that can be mistaken for food allergies are:

- Insufficient enzymes needed for digestion - For example, lactase is an enzyme that aids in the digestion of lactose, the primary sugar in milk products. A deficiency in lactase can contribute to lactose intolerance which causes bloating, cramping, diarrhea and excessive gas.
- Sensitivity to Food Additives - Processed foods have many food additives which can cause food allergy like symptoms. Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is one example of a food additive that is known to trigger severe reactions.
- Stress - Yes, stress can cause food allergy-like symptoms including abdominal pain, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or migraine headaches.
- Celiac Disease - Not a true food allergy, celiac disease is a chronic digestive condition triggered by eating gluten. This condition can lead to intestinal damage and affect the absorption of nutrients.

The first step is a consultation and evaluation. You will meet with one of our trained physicians to describe your symptoms and discuss your food history. The doctor will perform an examination to identify or exclude any medical problems.

There are a number of food allergy tests and tools.

- Food Diary

- Elimination Diet

- Food Allergy Blood Test