

# Newsletter

## *A Hidden Epidemic: Reflux and Food Allergies*

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The IBS Treatment Center is the nation's leading facility for the successful resolution of Irritable Bowel Syndrome. July 2009 Issue. Newsletter Published Monthly.

**A Hidden Epidemic: Reflux and Food Allergies**  
Possibly one of the most important and most overlooked causes of reflux is food allergy. Whether in infants or older children, studies indicate the importance of food allergies as a causal factor for reflux. Physicians who focus on food allergies and intolerances frequently see the successful resolution of reflux in their patients. Unfortunately, this has had little impact on the standard of practice for treating reflux.

Food allergies and intolerances are still widely misunderstood by both the public and physicians. This is especially true when it comes to determining whether or not your child is suffering from such a reaction. This article will explore this fascinating topic and help you gain a fuller appreciation for the complexities involved.

#### **What is a Food Allergy?**

Food allergies are much more complicated than most people, including most physicians, realize. Food allergies are typically thought of as relatively uncommon reactions to a few select foods, such as peanuts, that usually result in anaphylaxis, hives, or maybe asthma. This is how most allergy specialists think of food allergies. However, there are numerous research studies that indicate that food allergies cause many other conditions, including reflux.

Technically, an allergy is any reaction that involves the immune system. But the standard of practice in medicine is to use a much narrower definition of the word allergy. Therefore, in order to truly understand the breadth of allergic reactions, it is necessary to

define some of the underlying mechanisms involved in allergies.

#### **Conventional IgE Allergies**

Classic food allergies are the result of an IgE (immunoglobulin E) reaction to a food. IgE is a type of antibody produced by the immune system. When the immune system is attacking a food, it may produce IgE antibodies. IgE antibody reactions are the kind of reactions that are involved in hives and other conventional allergic reactions, but they can also cause reflux.

Many people are familiar with skin testing for allergies. Skin testing is the traditional type of food allergy testing. IgE reactions are the type of reactions that are being looked for when skin allergy testing is performed.

Skin tests, however, only assess whether or not the skin will react to something. They do not necessarily represent IgE levels in the blood, and they do not reflect other types of immune reactions, such as those more commonly found to cause reflux.

Some physicians are now using blood tests to measure IgE antibodies. This can be a bit more useful, but most cases of reflux are not caused by an IgE reaction to food. Therefore the food allergy will not show up on skin tests or on blood tests for IgE antibodies. Unfortunately, these tests will generally not be helpful in determining the cause of your child's reflux.

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## NOTE ABOUT DAIRY

It is interesting that we assume that milk from a cow is vitally important to our health. It doesn't make much sense when you think of it that way, and it doesn't make any sense when you look at it scientifically. We didn't evolve drinking milk from a cow, and there is no evidence to support claims that we need milk in order to be healthy. The reason we believe this is the convergence of two powerful things.

First, we really like the taste of things made from dairy. And second, the dairy industry has created one of the most effective marketing campaigns in our history on the premise that dairy contains nutrients that we know are important for our health. It's the perfect storm. We want dairy, and we think it's extremely good for us.

The big misconception is that you can't get those nutrients anywhere else. In fact you can, and humans have done so for eons. Ironically, if you are allergic to dairy then you probably aren't getting much of the nutritional value from it anyway.

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### Other Types of Food Allergy

As noted above, an allergy is any reaction that involves the immune system. And IgE antibody reactions are only one type of immune response to food. A majority of immune responses to food involve IgG reactions.

For example, let's consider a gluten intolerance. Just to confuse you, the standard of practice in medicine is to call this an intolerance. However, it is an immune reaction, and it definitely involves an immune reaction against gluten, which is a protein in wheat and many other grains.

A gluten intolerance does not show up on skin tests or on IgE blood tests. But it does show up on blood tests for IgG antibodies. And yes, studies have clearly shown that these reactions to gluten can cause reflux.

As you can see, the use of the words "allergy" and "intolerance" can be very confusing. But to help clarify the picture a little, consider dairy.

Most people assume that a reaction to dairy is a lactose intolerance. Lactose is a sugar found in dairy products. A lactose intolerance is the result of an enzyme deficiency that causes an inability to digest lactose. This is not an allergy because it does not involve the immune system. However, a lactose intolerance can cause symptoms like gas, bloating, and loose stools. A lactose intolerance is not usually associated with reflux, while dairy allergy often is. Therefore, avoiding lactose but still ingesting dairy may not be enough to resolve reflux caused by a dairy allergy.

As a result, many people discover that in order to resolve reflux, all dairy must be avoided, not just lactose. Many studies have shown this as well. This is due to an all too common immune reaction to dairy. This reaction will usually show up on blood tests as an IgG antibody reaction to cow's milk.

Dairy is usually the first non-breast-milk food introduced into the human diet, and is unfortunately the most likely to cause health problems, including reflux. What is

even more interesting is that when you run IgG food allergy tests you frequently find reactions to dairy in reflux patients. And even more importantly, when you take them off dairy they get better.

However, it's not just a dairy allergy that can cause reflux. As we already discussed, gluten intolerance is also known to trigger reflux. (Note that reflux can be the only presenting symptom of celiac disease, the most researched form of gluten intolerance. But also note that you do not have to have celiac disease to be gluten intolerant.) In fact, any food can potentially trigger reflux. And the right kind of testing will point to the relevant food(s). But there are certain foods that come up more often than others as allergens. The top four food allergies that result in reflux are:

Dairy, Egg, Soy, Gluten

But remember, it's not the food that is the real problem. The real issue is how your body is reacting to that food rather than anything inherently bad in the food itself.

Challenges in Adjusting The Diet Testing is extremely helpful in narrowing down your food allergy(ies), but the proper testing isn't always available, and not always necessary.

One potential way around testing is to eliminate a food from the diet in order to determine whether or not it is causing a reaction. However, this is often easier said than done, even if you know exactly which food to avoid.

Let's say for example that you know or suspect that your child has a dairy allergy. The first thing that you eliminate is milk. But this is only the most obvious source of dairy in the diet. Dairy comes in many forms. Cheese, ice cream, and yogurt are equally important triggers. So are whey and casein, two important dairy components used in many processed foods. Even butter is still dairy.



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In reality, you must know all of these things and then read the ingredients on everything ingested. Dairy products are in bread products, in chocolate, and in lots of other unsuspected foods.

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It's a challenge, and it's an unfortunate fact of our current food culture. Even though you may want the last ingredient on the list to be irrelevant or think that it won't affect your child doesn't mean that it won't cause a problem. The immune system is designed to be an excellent detector of these things, and they aren't nearly as hidden from our immune system as they are from our eyes by the small print on labels.

Once you've thoroughly eliminated a food from the diet it may take a few weeks for the damage to fully heal and for the symptoms to completely resolve. This can make it very difficult to assess the potential success of an elimination diet without the benefit of good food allergy testing. That doesn't mean that it shouldn't be tried, but these issues need to be kept in mind.

### Baby Formulas

Baby formula is another challenge. There are many formulas and they make many claims. But it is much more difficult than it first appears to find a truly nonallergenic formula.

Standard formulas such as Regular Similac Advance, Enfamil Lipil, and Nestle Good Start Supreme contain both lactose and cow's milk proteins. Then there are lactose free formulas, such as Lactofree and Similac Lactose free. These will help an infant with a lactose intolerance, but they still contain dairy proteins such as casein and are not appropriate for infants with a dairy allergy.

On the surface it might appear that the best option for many babies would be one of the hypoallergenic formulas. Two of the most common are Similac's Alimentum and Enfamil's Pregestimil Lipil hypoallergenic formulas. But both con-

tain dairy in the form of casein, and they also contain soy and corn. The dairy is enzymatically broken down, making it easier to digest. However, these formulas are certainly not hypoallergenic if you have a dairy, soy or corn allergy. Interestingly, there is no standardized definition for the word "hypoallergenic," a term coined by advertisers. And there is no regulation specifically defining or governing the use of the term "hypoallergenic."

Two formulas that are truly dairy free are Neocate and EleCare. However, they still contain soy and corn components. They may be the best options for infants who react to dairy.

### Infants and Reflux

What about infants who are not on a formula and only breast feed? How can food allergies trigger their reflux? Breast milk contains proteins from the foods that the mother is eating. It also contains antibodies. We usually think of this as a good thing, but if the mother has an immune reaction to a food and she continues to eat that food, then she is passing those antibodies on to the infant. Therefore infants can be reacting directly to the food proteins that are passing through the breast milk, or they can react to the antibodies that they are receiving from mom.

The mother may not notice any symptoms from her food allergy, and she need not experience reflux. The potential list of problems which a food allergy can cause are far too numerous to list here, but include fatigue, digestive problems, headaches, heartburn, and skin problems. In such cases the mother is the one who should be tested for food allergies. Then she can alter her diet in order to benefit her infant.

### Summary

The current medical approach to reflux is primarily one of attempting to treat the symptom without an understanding of the cause. This is unfortunately the case with many health problems, not just reflux. Using acid blockers in infants and children is merely a patch, if it works at all. And when it does resolve the reflux, the underlying problem remains.

Even if the child ultimately grows out of the symptom of reflux it does not mean that they grow out of the food allergy. As is the case with most food allergies, the immune system is still responding to the food, and a subsequent inflammatory response is still occurring.

Every health problem has a logical cause, including reflux. Sorting out that cause should be the primary focus of the health care community. Many people have discovered that reflux is often due to an immune response to a food or a group of foods. It may be difficult to find the kind of medical support that you need in order to help sort this out, but don't give up. You may need to be your own advocate, and you may need to do a lot of work on your own, but don't underestimate your ability to promote and change the health of your children.



We at the IBS Treatment Center were lucky enough to have Delicious Planet prepare us a catered lunch a few weeks ago and decided to write about this great company located in the greater Seattle area. Voted 2007 winner for Best of Citysearch, Delicious Planet proves Seattle's # 1 gourmet home delivery service. If it's breakfast, lunch dinner or even dessert you are craving, Delicious Planet has what you are looking for. Delicious Planet specializes in producing food for Food allergies and sensitivities. The food is already low in many common allergens such as Wheat and Dairy, but will completely work around Wheat (or all Gluten), Cheese (or all Dairy), Soy, Nuts and Corn on anything in the Dinner Entrée, Lunch Entrée and Kids Meal categories. Please visit their website for more information on their products and delivery locations: <http://www.delicious-planet.com>

### *RECIPE OF THE MONTH:*

1 bag of Gluten-Free Pantry Country French Bread Mix dough  
(<http://www.glutenfree.com/Gluten-Free-Pantry-French-Bread-and-Pizza-Mix/Item126057M>)  
¾ cup gluten-free ricotta cheese  
½ cup grated parmesan cheese  
1 cup shredded zucchini  
1 cup sliced mushrooms  
1 cup ground, crumbled, cooked sausage or beef  
1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese Garlic powder, oregano, basil



Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

- 1) Spread prepared dough between 2 pieces of oiled plastic wrap. Press into a rectangle, about 10-x16-inches. Remove top sheet of plastic and spread ricotta evenly over the top, leaving 1-inch border around all sides. Sprinkle remaining ingredients evenly over ricotta.
- 2) Roll dough gently (along the 16 inch side), using the bottom layer of plastic wrap to roll it tightly. Roll will be about 3-4 inches hick and 16 inches long.
- 3) Place roll onto a greased cookie sheet. Brush with olive oil and bake 15-22 minutes or until golden brown. Allow to stand five minutes after baking. Cut into slices. Serve with pizza sauce

*courtesy of* [www.glutenfree.com](http://www.glutenfree.com)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## *General Mills to roll out more gluten-free products*



General Mills's president of baking products Ann Simonds, says the company decided to pursue gluten-free products last year after its customer-relations department noticed that customer inquiries about food allergies and sensitivities most frequently centered on whether items contained gluten. So last July, General Mills released a gluten-free version of its Chex cereal, and the company received thousands of grateful emails and phone calls.

General Mills Betty Crocker brand is rolling out gluten-free mixes for cookies, brownies and cakes. The mixes are the first gluten-free offering from a major, mainstream brand in the cake-mix aisle. Gluten is a key protein in wheat, but many people react badly to it. General Mills plans to launch more than 50 new products -- the gluten-free items among them -- in the first half of the recently started 2010 fiscal year.

# EVENTS

## Gluten Free Cooking EXPO

If you are in the Lisle Illinois area August 15-16, 2009 please come and attend this wonderful Gluten Free Cooking Expo. This event will hold 2 days of cooking classes led by professional chefs, nutritionalists and cookbook authors.

Join them for:

- \* Cooking and demos with samples
- \* Gluten and Dairy free meals
- \* Gluten Free vendor fair
- \* Special event for children

**Dr. Wangen will be there!**

**August 15 - 16, 2009**  
**The Wyndham Hotel**  
**Lisle, Illinois**

**For more information please visit:**  
**[www.glutenfreeclasses.com](http://www.glutenfreeclasses.com)**



## Dr. Wangen's Scheduled Presentations

Dr. Wangen and other representatives of the IBS Treatment Center give talks, present at Health Fairs, and etc. If you would like Dr. Wangen or a representative of the IBS Treatment Center to speak to your organization please contact us via email (at [info@ibstreatmentcenter.com](mailto:info@ibstreatmentcenter.com)) or by phone at 206-264-1111.

### **Texas Tour:**

Thursday, **July 30th, 2009**

Dr. Wangen will speak in San Antonio, Texas at the Alamo Celiac Gluten Intolerant Group ([www.AlamoCeliac.org](http://www.AlamoCeliac.org)).

Friday, **July 31st, 2009 at 5 PM**

Dr. Wangen is speaking at the Alamo Celiac GIG in Austin, TX ([www.AlamoCeliac.org](http://www.AlamoCeliac.org)). For more information contact Frances Kelley at [FKelley@austin.rr.com](mailto:FKelley@austin.rr.com)

Saturday, **August 1st, 2009 at 10 AM**

Dr. Wangen is speaking in Fort Worth to the North Texas Gluten Intolerant Group, ([www.NorthTexasGig.com](http://www.NorthTexasGig.com)).

Sunday, **August 2nd, 2009 at 2 PM**

Dr. Wangen will be speaking at Laura's Bistro, a gluten free restaurant. This event is sponsored by Lone Star Celiac ([www.dfwceliac.org](http://www.dfwceliac.org)) in Dallas, Texas. Rose Mary Simmons is the contact, 214-632-1878.

**In Chicago Area: Saturday and Sunday, August 15th and 16th, 2009**

Dr. Wangen will be presenting both days at The Gluten Free (and Mostly Dairy Free) Cooking Expo in the Chicago area. The expo is at the Wyndham Hotel, Lisle, Illinois with additional info at <http://www.glutenfreeclasses.com> Dr. Wangen's presentations are: August 15: "Why Wheat Isn't Good For Everyone" and August 16: "Understanding Non-Celiac Gluten Intolerance".

**Federal Way, WA: Thursday, August 27th, 2009**

Marlene's Market and Deli will host a talk by Dr. Wangen at the Federal Way Store at 7PM. More info on will be posted soon on Marlene's website at <http://www.marlenesmarket-deli.com/newevents.html>

**Fort Dodge, Iowa: Saturday, Sept 12th, 2009**

Dr. Wangen will be a featured speaker at the Iowa Annual Celiac Sprue Conference in Fort Dodge, IA. Details to come.

**Denver, CO: First Week of October, 2009 Date TBD**

Dr. Wangen will be speaking in Denver. Details to come.

**Seattle, WA : Saturday, October 17th, 2009**

Dr. Wangen will be speaking about his book "Healthier Without Wheat" at the East West Bookshop on Roosevelt in Seattle from Noon to 1:30 PM as part of the local author's day event.

### **East Coast Tour:**

**In Richmond, Virginia: Thursday, November 5th, 2009 at 6:30 PM**

Dr. Wangen and Dr. Ford (of New Zealand) will be making presentations as part of a dinner event at The West End GIG Group [www.gigofrichmond.org](http://www.gigofrichmond.org) in Richmond, VA. The event will be held at Trinity U. Methodist Church, 903 Forest Ave, Richmond, VA 23229. Contact Madelyn Smith, Branch Manager, for more information at Phone: (804) 968-4111; Email: [twegig@comcast.net](mailto:twegig@comcast.net).

**In Harrisburg, PA: Saturday, November 7th, 2009 at 2 PM**

Dr. Wangen is speaking to GIG of Harrisburg, PA [www.harrisburgceliacs.org/](http://www.harrisburgceliacs.org/)

**In Rhode Island: Sunday, November 8th, 2009 from 1 to 4 PM**

Dr. Wangen will be presenting at the American Celiac Support Group meeting in Pascoag, RI.

**In New York: Monday, November 9th, 2009**

Dr. Wangen will be teaching a class at the Natural Gourmet Institute <http://www.naturalgourmetschool.com> in the borough of Manhattan, New York City, New York.