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Dr. Stephen Wangen

Nickel Allergies and Digestive Problems

No, it's not being allergic to money. But as many of you know, some people are allergic to the metal nickel. This usually manifests as redness of the skin, which occurs when the skin comes in contact with nickel. This is what we might call a more classic allergic reaction, different from the hidden types of food allergies commonly discussed in this newsletter.

A nickel allergy is often discovered when exposure to an item of clothing or jewelry leads to a red rash. This may occur when a fastener made from nickel, such as the button on your pants, comes into contact with your belly and leads to a rash. Or when a piece of jewelry containing nickel, such as an earring, bracelet, watchband, etc. comes into contact with your skin and causes a rash. These reactions are often readily apparent to the wearer and are called contact dermatitis. But nickel allergies can also trigger eczema on other areas of the skin.

What does all of this have to do with digestive problems?

Far more than you might imagine. The digestive tract is a highly specialized extension of your skin. It is a continuation of the epithelial tissue that surrounds the rest of your body. Therefore, it should not be too surprising to realize that if something affects your skin, then it could also impact your digestive tract as well and cause abdominal pain, diarrhea, and other digestive problems. An astute reader recently wrote us and asked why we had never talked about this before. Frankly, it never occurred to us. But upon further investigation, it certainly makes sense.

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The **IBS Treatment Center** is the nation's leading facility for the successful treatment of Irritable Bowel Syndrome

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How Your GI Tract Gets Exposed to Nickel

Some foods are particularly high in nickel. When you ingest them the lining of your digestive tract is exposed to nickel. And like your skin, it is possible that the nickel can trigger an inflammatory reaction, except within your digestive tract.

Not everyone who has a skin reaction to nickel will necessarily have a digestive problem from ingested nickel. Only people especially sensitive to nickel will notice this reaction, because the nickel is a not maintaining constant contact with the epithelial tissue at a high dose like is in the case of earrings or buttons on pants. But if you do have a skin reaction to nickel, it is certainly something important to consider.

Foods That Contain Nickel

Foods known to be high in nickel include chocolate (cacao), coffee, tea, nuts, soy beans and other legumes, and even oatmeal. Canned food is also often higher in nickel. But remember, just because you react to one or more of these foods does not necessarily mean that it is because of a nickel allergy. There are many other reasons that people can react to the foods listed above.

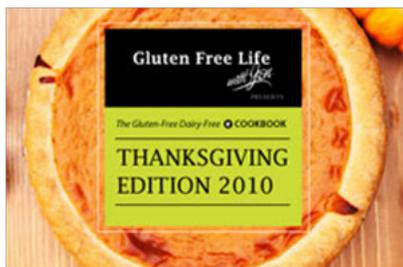
You may already know if you have a serious reaction to nickel due to a skin reaction, but in some cases your digestive reaction may not be that obvious. Conventional allergists offer a patch test that can help, but is far from perfect. And in some cases the only way to sort is out is to do a trial diet low in nickel. Unfortunately this is the only treatment as well, but it is possible to do. And if it isn't solving your problem, then please come and see us. We'll try to help you sort out the rest.

Picarrelli, A, et. Al., Oral Mucosa Patch Test: A New Tool to Recognize and Study the Adverse Effects of Dietary Nickel Exposure. Biol Trace Elem Res. 2010 Mar 5. [Epub ahead of print]

Sharma AD. Relationship Between Nickel Allergy And Diet. Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol 2007;73:307-12

COOKBOOK OFFER

Allergen Free Thanksgiving Cooking



Thanksgiving just got a lot easier with the latest edition of the **Thanksgiving Gluten Free/Dairy Free E-Cookbook** published by Jen Cafferty. Jen has shared over twenty of her best Thanksgiving recipes. Plus, you get a gluten free turkey list and tips and substitutions to make your holiday both tasty and effortless.

The e-cookbook can be viewed on your computer or printed. Beautiful color photos and easy-to-read follow instructions will allow you to prepare all of the gluten free/dairy free recipes.

Go to: <https://gfafexpo.com/tickets/thanksgiving-e-cookbook/> to order your e-cookbook. \$6.99 each.

Gluten and Dairy Free Pumpkin Pie

1 pkg Mama's Pie Crust Mix or other single gluten free pie crust
 1 3/4 cups pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie mix)
 3/4 cup sucanat or sugar (sucanat will give it a rich molasses flavor)
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/2 tsp. ginger
 1/4 tsp. ground cloves
 2 tsp. vanilla
 2 eggs
 6 oz pkg. plain coconut milk yogurt
 3/4 cup coconut milk

Directions: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prepare pie crust as directed. If using Mama's Pie Crust mix or recipes, use Spectrum Dairy Free Buttery Sticks. (Do not prebake crust)

In a medium bowl, combine pumpkin, sucanat, cinnamon, salt, ginger, cloves, vanilla, eggs, yogurt and coconut milk. Using a whisk, mix well. Pour evenly into prepared pie crust. If desired, baste edges of pie crust with egg white. Bake for 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake for 50-60 minutes. When the knife comes out clean in the center it is done. It may still jiggle slightly, but that is okay. Allow to cool completely.

Chocolate Pumpkin Pie

1 pkg Mama's Pie Crust Mix or other single gluten free pie crust
 2 cups pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie mix)
 1/4 cup cocoa
 1 tsp. cinammon
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 cup sugar (suggested: Organic Evaporated Cane Juice)
 2 tsp. vanilla
 2 eggs
 1/2 cup heavy cream
 1/4 cup milk
 1 cup mini chocolate chips



Directions: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prepare pie crust as directed. (Do not prebake crust). In a medium bowl, combine pumpkin, cocoa, cinammon, salt, sugar, vanilla, eggs, cream and milk. Whisk together until well blended. Spread evenly into prepared pie crust. Sprinkle generously with mini chocolate chips, covering the top evenly. Baste the edge of pie with egg white if desired.

Bake for 20 minutes at 400 degrees. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake for 50-60 minutes longer or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Allow to cool. Then top with a dollop of whip cream and serve.

Thanks to Gluten Free Mama for these recipes <http://www.glutenfreemama.com/>

Healthy Holiday Sides Cooking Class

Monday, December 6, 6:30-8:30pm

This popular “Side Dishes” cooking class is being offered at Green Lake Nutrition. Class is lead by Adriane Angarano, a graduate of Bastyr University’s Nutrition and Dietetics program.

The following menu items will be presented and available for tasting:

- *Wild Rice and Fig Stuffed Squash*
- *Savory Stuffed Sweet Potatoes*
- *Glazed Pearl Onions and Peas*
- *Maple Dijon Roasted Brussels Sprouts*
- *Skillet Greens with Leeks and Cider*
- *Homemade Apple-Pearsauce*
- *Green Cabbage and Apple Slaw*
- *Poached Pears with Jasmine*

Cost is \$40 per person or \$35 if you register with a friend. Class is held at Green Lake Nutrition, 6329 - 20th Ave NE, Seattle, 98115. Class is limited to 6 participants and will fill. Call 206-729-5111 or email admin@greenlakenutrition.com.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Vote for the Best Gluten Free Products

Triumph Dining is launching the first-annual **Best of Gluten-Free Awards** to select the best gluten-free products on the market today, and to thank the companies that provide them.

The Best of Gluten-Free Awards consist of 43 different categories such as: “Best Gluten-Free Bread Mix” and “Best Gluten-Free Chocolate Chip Cookie.” Winners will be announced in early 2011.

To cast your vote go to: www.triumphdining.com/blog/best-of-gluten-free

The first 2,000 voters will get a FREE five-pack of American Dining Cards (worth \$11!). The dining cards are completely free to anyone with a US shipping address, just for completing the survey.