

## Atopy: management of Asthma, Eczema

Atopy is a condition in which a person is born with a tendency to become easily allergic to airborne, food, and contact allergens. Atopic individuals are more likely to develop any one or all of the following: general allergies (running nose, chronic sinus and ear infections, itchy eyes), asthma, and eczema (patches of itchy dry or weepy skin) and gastrointestinal symptoms (irritable bowel symptoms). Typically, patients with atopy have the following:

Sensitivity to nickel: Nickel sensitivity is very common in individuals with allergy symptoms. Nickel acts as a co-factor in increasing the reaction to allergens. These individuals can react to costume jewelry that contain nickel in the metal. More importantly they can have significant symptoms from nickel containing foods. See list of foods and other substances that have high nickel content in our other Handout: "Nickel sensitivity- Management". Atopic individuals can greatly improve their symptoms by limiting exposure to nickel substances, foods, water etc. Also, we have found great benefit from using a very safe chelating agent "Lipophos-EDTA". We used to only have EDTA in Intravenous form, but we now have a very effective oral form (lipophos EDTA) which has made it very useful in children and needle phobic adults. Nickel sensitivity varies in atopic individuals. Everyone has a weekly symptom threshold. For example, one person might get symptoms from eating one peanut butter sandwich per week and another might not get symptoms until they have had several peanut butter sandwiches. Atopic individuals absorb nickel then gradually excrete it out through their urine and feces. So, if you have gone for a month with very low nickel exposure, you will be able to tolerate more nickel containing foods for a short while. Besides standard allergy symptoms, nickel sensitivity can exacerbate a pre-existing migraine problem and can cause varying levels of fatigue and general malaise.

Essential fatty acid deficiency: most patients and doctors have learned the importance of omega-3 fatty acids. Little is talked about omega-6's because most American diets have plenty of omega-6's in the form of Linoleic Acid (found in most common oils- safflower, corn, peanut, canola). The average person is able to convert this oil in the body into another important oil called gamma linoleic acid with an enzyme. Gamma linoleic acid (GLA) is then made into a very important substance called Prostaglandin E-1 (PGE-1) which is an important anti-inflammatory messenger molecule. Reduced PGE-1 results in greater inflammation in the respiratory lining, skin and nerves. Low PGE-1 results in more irritability, anxiety, and in women more PMS symptoms. Unfortunately, atopic individuals have limited ability to convert this linoleic acid into gamma linoleic acid and hence have greater inflammation due to the relative lack of PGE-1.

This problem can easily be overcome by bypassing the defective enzyme and giving GLA supplements. GLA can be found in three supplements: borage seed oil, evening primrose oil, and black currant seed oil. We generally find borage most value for the money.

Sensitivities to airborne allergens, food allergen and contact allergens:

We at the Chung Institute can identify the substances that you are allergic to with Autonomic Response Testing. We can then gradually desensitize you so that you become either no longer allergic or at least become less sensitive. We use a method called Low Dose Immunotherapy which we believe is far safer and efficient than standard allergy injections.

## Treatment of Specific Atopic Symptoms

### Asthma:

Conventional treatments mainly focus on treating the symptoms with two types of inhalers:

- **Bronchodilators:** These medications help dilate the airways by relaxing the smooth muscles that wrap around the bronchial tubes. They can cause symptoms of nervousness and insomnia. These meds do not address the cause.
- **Steroid inhalers:** These medications are powerful anti-inflammatory chemicals that not only inhibit inflammation but also inhibits cellular immunity which makes you susceptible to yeast, fungi, and mold. They also can inhibit growth and stature of children. Patients on long term steroid inhalers frequently have a secondary yeast/fungi/mold infection in their airways which will result in marked symptoms if the steroid is stopped. Hence once one has been on steroid inhalers, the subsequent colonization by yeast can make a person dependent because one will have severe symptom exacerbations when stopping the inhaler.
- **Avoidance of allergens:** Standard allergy skin testing can identify air borne allergens but are not as accurate for identifying food allergens. This avoidance method is helpful in reducing symptoms by avoiding allergens but causes significant restriction of one's lifestyle and is again is not curative
- **Allergy desensitization with injections:** Take years to be effective. Risk of anaphylactic reaction from injecting foreign allergic proteins into your skin.
- **Systemic steroids:** Severe exacerbations sometimes are treated with systemic steroids: either Solumedrol, Medrol, or prednisone. Frequent use of this medication can result in high blood pressure, diabetes, necrosis of the hip joint, and fungal infections.

Treatment at the Chung Institute: We have a five-prong approach:

1. Reduction of nickel exposure and nickel in the body
2. GLA supplementation
3. Acupuncture
4. Desensitization using Low Dose Immune therapy:
5. General measures of allergen avoidance until the above four measures take effect and use of simple supplements to assist to strengthen the immune system.

1. Nickel Sensitivity: If ART reveals that you are intolerant to nickel: we recommend the following:
  - a. Reduce or eliminate as much high nickel containing foods from your diet for 4 weeks. See (Nickel sensitivity- management handout). After your symptoms are much better, you can gradually play with increasing the foods that contain nickel to see where your threshold is. Unfortunately, many nickel containing foods are considered "health foods". Individuals vary as to the total amount they can eat in a given week.  
Avoid using stainless steel water bottles (stainless steel is an alloy that contain nickel), avoid canned foods

Use ceramic coated pots and pans for cooking

Avoid metal dental caps, metal braces. Stainless steel prosthetics, surgical clips, steel rods.

Avoid long hot showers (hot water tanks have water that has been heated and stored in a stainless-steel tank and have higher nickel content than cold tap water).

Patients with severe hand eczema may need to wear gloves when handling metal doors, metal objects until the therapies have begun to take effect.

- b. Take one ounce of lipophos-EDTA diluted in water, juice or undiluted. Repeat in one week, then once every 2 weeks until 4 ounces are consumed. Then use one ounce as needed every 1-8 weeks. For children lipophos-EDTA: 1 tsp for 0-2 yrs., 2 tsp for 2-6 yr, 1 tbs for 6-12 yr. We have found that when the gut is cleared of nickel, individuals can liberalize his/her diet to some degree. In fact, many individuals especially after successful desensitization can return to just a modestly reduced nickel diet.
  - c. Vitamin C taken with a high nickel containing food can reduce its absorption. You can take a 500mg Vitamin C with any meal that has high levels of nickel. Another simple trick is to drink water with a spritz of a slice of lemon with every meal.
  - d. Consider taking iron supplements. Iron deficiency enhances absorption of nickel into the body. Menstruating women who are the most likely to be iron deficient are most likely to need supplementation. Remind us to check you for iron deficiency.
2. Take GLA supplementation: for adults, we recommend two capsules a day of the "ultra-GLA" from Douglas Labs or the equivalent for 1 month and then either maintain this dose or drop to 1 cap a day. For children 6- 12 years old 1 capsule/day. For small children who cannot take capsules, the oil is relatively tasteless, and you can make a simple pinhole through the capsule and squeeze the content into the mouth or onto a teaspoon and give 1 caps every other day.
  3. Acupuncture (and for children painless laser acupuncture) is a very useful treatment that can markedly improve allergy symptoms especially they have severe asthma, sinusitis, or eczema. With severe exacerbations, we recommend 1/wk. or more.
  4. Low Dose Immunotherapy, (LDI): This form of therapy is an elegant and powerful therapy. It uses extreme dilutions similar to homeopathic dilutions, of the frequency signature of the antigens that you are allergic to. These are frequencies are impregnated into simple water molecules. Water has unique electromagnetic properties that allow it to store information analogous to the portable zip drives for a computer. They are extremely nontoxic because LDI's are basically water. LDI's are thought to modulate T-regulator lymphocytes whose job is to regulate the immune reactions to foreign antigens. We jokingly say that T-regulator cells behave like sensitive teenagers: just as recommending a behavior change in a teenager too often or to aggressively can have an opposite effect. In LDI immune therapy,
    - If too strong of a dose is given, a temporary exacerbation of the symptoms can occur. The consolation of suffering from an exacerbation is that it means that the LDI has the correct antigens that will ultimately help you and adjusting the dose will likely eventually eliminate the very same exacerbation symptoms. If

you have an exacerbation, hold off taking any further LDI at home until your next office visit.

- If a proper dose is given too often, a temporary exacerbation can also occur. If a dose that seems to be working makes you worse within a week of taking it, you may need to wait as long as 8 weeks before trying another dose.
- LDI's should be ideally taken ½ hour away from ingesting food or flavored drink or chewing or brushing teeth.

5. General measures: allergy avoidance: We can test through autonomic response testing (ART) which allergens are disturbing you and help you with an avoidance strategy. These measures are especially useful until all the above measures begin to resolve your problem.

- Air borne allergen: a good air purifier with a fine hepa filter is helpful in eliminating air borne allergens,
- “Dust allergy” is really dust mite feces allergy. Dust mites live in the fabric bedding and mattress material, feeding on dead skin cells that have flaked off. They cannot penetrate plastic pillow and bed covers. It would be useful to obtain plastic covers for pillows and mattresses and wash pillow and bed covers at least once a week or more. Then the overall number of dust mites will diminish considerably. If your allergy symptoms are year-round, dust allergies are likely one of your allergies.  
Dust mite feces and other allergens are more likely to be suspended in air when the air is dry and full of static. This is more likely to occur in the winter months. It can be useful to run a humidifier throughout the winter especially in the bedroom to keep the static down in order to reduce the suspension of airborne particles into the air.
- Pollen allergies: keep windows closed during high pollen count days (especially spring and fall) especially at night.
- Food allergies: most foods can be desensitized by LDI over time. Gluten is the most difficult, however.
- Vitamin D3 and K2 are very important immune modulators. We recommend
  - For 12-year-old to adults: 10,000 IU of Vitamin D plus 380mcg of MK-7 form of vitamin K2. This can be obtained through 2 caps of K-Force by Orthomolecular.
  - For Kids 6 – 12 yrs.: 5,000IU plus 180 mcg. 1 cap of K-Force.
  - For Kids 1-6: 1000 IU/year of life plus K2. 1 drop per year of liquid Vitamin D/K2 solution by Douglas labs.
  - In the summer months reduce dose by ½.

With the 5-prong approach we have seen even extremely refractory symptoms improve and we often are able to reduce or discontinue many or all of the allergy/asthma medications. Eventually our patients can also liberalize their diet, and reduce their restricted lifestyle as well.