

# FOOD ALLERGIES

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS



### Allergy Tests

#### General Foods - IgG/IgE

Tests 96 foods from a variety of food groups including: meat, fish, dairy, grains, vegetables and fruits.

#### Vegetarian - IgG/IgE

Substitutes meats found in the General Foods panel with more fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes.

#### Herbs & Spices - IgG/IgE

Includes 24 common herbs like echinacea and milk thistle along with 24 common spices (e.g. cinnamon and vanilla).

#### Inhalants - IgG/IgE

Common inhaled allergens like grasses, molds, trees, weeds and airborne indoor particles are tested. IgG can be done via blood spot, while IgE testing requires a blood draw.

#### Candida IgG

Elevated IgG antibodies to Candida correlate with symptoms of fungal disease. Symptoms associated with Candida overgrowth include clouded thinking, depression, diarrhea, fatigue, menstrual pain, vaginal yeast infections, and headaches.

With allergies, the immune system reacts by releasing cells called antibodies. Foods that cause antibodies to be released are called allergens. Two types of antibodies commonly produced in response to foods are IgG (immunoglobulin G) and IgE (immunoglobulin E).

### IgE Reactions

When we speak of food allergies, most people think in terms of IgE reactions. IgE reactions are rapid reactions that occur within minutes of consumption and can cause life-threatening allergies (e.g. peanut allergies). Skin eruptions (hives, eczema), breathing and digestive problems can also be associated with IgE reactions. After first time exposure to an allergen, the body remembers what the allergen looks like and has IgE ready for instant release if it sees that allergen again. Because they appear right after a food allergen is eaten, IgE allergies can often be detected by carefully observing reactions to foods.

### IgG Reactions

While IgE reactions happen in just minutes, IgG reactions take hours or days to develop. This makes it almost impossible to uncover which foods are causing the problem without testing. In an IgG reaction, the IgG antibodies attach themselves to the allergen and create an antibody-allergen complex. These complexes are normally removed by special cells called macrophages. However, if they are present in large numbers and the allergen is still being consumed, the macrophages can't keep up. The allergen-antibody complexes accumulate and are deposited in body tissues. Once in tissue, these complexes release inflammation causing chemicals that may contribute to disease.

### Conditions associated with IgG food reactions

**Weight gain:** Antibody-allergen complexes in tissue cause inflammation, which causes fluid retention and weight gain. To fight inflammation, the body releases a chemical called ghrelin, which also happens to be an appetite stimulant. Thus, IgG food reactions can cause weight gain in two ways: fluid retention and increased appetite.

**Digestive disorders:** Conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) have been linked to IgG food allergies. Studies have shown that elimination of foods producing an IgG reaction can alleviate IBS symptoms.

**Mood/attention deficit disorders:** Deposition of antibody-allergen complexes in nervous system tissues may contribute to hyperactivity, depression, anxiety, inability to concentrate and other mood disorders. There is some evidence that eliminating IgG food allergens improves attentiveness in children.

**Other conditions:** Antibody-allergen complexes can be deposited in any tissue and cause symptoms over time. For example, complexes deposited in lung tissue can cause asthma or other respiratory problems; in skin tissue, eczema may result; in blood vessels, hypertension may emerge; in joints, joint pain could occur; and so on, depending on the tissues involved.

### Conditions associated with IgE food reactions

IgE food reactions commonly cause hives and skin rashes, digestive problems, itchy watery eyes, and sometimes life-threatening anaphylactic reactions.

### Why Test for Food Allergies?

- Testing for IgG reactions is the easiest way to determine which foods are causing the problem as reactions are so slow to develop, it is virtually impossible to try and figure out reactions by observing diet.
- IgE testing can be useful if you have unexplained reactions like hives or for uncovering allergies to inhaled particles. Reactions to specific allergens can be tested from a serum sample (which requires a blood draw). The total amount of IgE (not specific to individual allergens) can be measured with the Total-E test. A high total IgE level could mean you have a parasite infection, or it could mean you have an IgE allergy to one or more foods.

## Why Test?

Good health has a lot to do with maintaining balance; the right balance of work and play, the right balance of nutrients in the diet, and the right kinds of foods.

Undiagnosed food allergies may contribute to symptoms and biochemical changes that eventually lead to illness.

Rocky Mountain Analytical is committed to offering tests that identify food allergies and other imbalances - so they can be corrected before disease develops!

## About Rocky Mountain Analytical

Rocky Mountain Analytical is an accredited medical laboratory located in Calgary, Alberta. We started in 2002 with saliva hormone testing, and have been growing steadily ever since.

In 2008, we added Hair Element Analysis to our test menu. Exposure to toxic elements can create a wide variety of health problems.

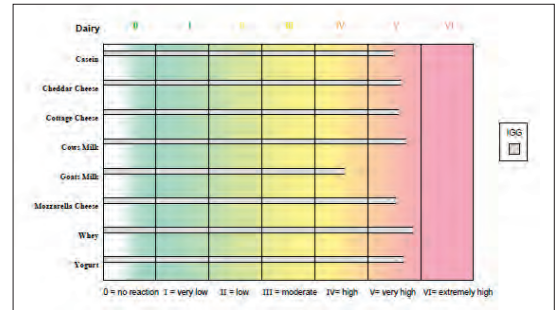
Ask your health care provider for more information about these or any other Rocky Mountain Analytical tests.

**We're on the web!**  
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## Test Results

A sample graph of allergy results appears at right. The graph clearly shows reactions to each food: the longer the bar, the greater the reaction. Any bars that appear in the red shaded areas are foods that are considered highly reactive. So, it is very simple to see at a glance which foods are problematic for you. Knowing the foods you react to is an important first step to achieving better health.



## Eliminating reactive foods

Getting a food allergy test is a first step towards improving your health. Once you receive your results, your practitioner will help you formulate a plan to eliminate the problem foods from your diet. Most people see improvement of symptoms within a few weeks of eliminating the reactive foods. It is important to know that removing food allergens from the diet can sometimes result in withdrawal symptoms like headaches, tiredness, irritability and hunger.

## How Leaky Gut contributes to food allergies

*Leaky gut syndrome* is caused by inflammation in the gut lining. Inflammation can be caused by food allergies, stress, certain drugs, and alcohol. An inflamed gut lining causes food particles to leak through into the abdomen. The presence of food particles outside the gut causes the body to produce immunoglobulins to attack them, because it thinks they are invaders. Thus, anyone with a leaky gut should be tested for food allergies, and anyone with a lot of food allergies may need to be treated for leaky gut. Your health care practitioner may suggest treatments for your digestive system in addition to dietary changes.

## Unexpected results

- No or low reaction may occur if you have not eaten the food for some time prior to collecting the sample. In other words; if you don't eat it, you don't produce antibodies to it so no reaction occurs. The longer it's been since you consumed the food, the less of a reaction there will be.
- Food reactions can also arise from a lack of digestive enzymes or stomach acid. For example, lactose intolerance is due to lactase enzyme deficiency. This is not an immune reaction, and therefore antibodies to milk products are not produced.
- Food reactions can also arise from previous negative experiences with a specific food (e.g. food poisoning). It is possible to have a physical reaction to subsequent exposures to that food.
- Sometimes reactions appear for foods seldom or never eaten. For example: a child reacting to coffee. This is usually due to cross-sensitivity with a related food, or may result from inadvertent exposure to that food (hidden ingredient in packaged food item or sauce).