

Why Do I Have Allergies?

By Luke Gasior

There are many factors involved in how and why our bodies respond to the environment the way they do. Many aspects of this topic are not well understood by medicine. However, our understanding expands each year. Generally, these are some the things that seem to be important: genetic predisposition, environmental exposure, and overall physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing; these all have an effect on allergies. I will try to give a short explanation in an understandable way.

Heredity, the traits and characteristics passed down from our parents, gives us the predispositions and, ultimately, instructions on the response that our bodies will have to environmental factors. This tendency to have an allergic reaction, or to have a very low exposure threshold, makes the allergic person more likely to notice environmental changes like; food, dust, mold, pollen etc... Allergy is defined as a hypersensitive reaction to normally occurring proteins; our bodies are continuously being exposed to things like viruses, bacteria, yeast, house dust, mold, animal dander, pollen, and food; all of which are foreign to our immune system. Dealing with this load continuously requires an enormous amount of energy and resources, both of which are in limited supply. It seems to be that the more demands are placed on the immune system, the more allergic reactions seem to be a problem. Every time you have an allergic response many powerful chemicals are released into the bloodstream and tissues. The immune system has a threshold, also called a tipping point, where allergic reactions do become serious, and if chronic, can cause serious illness. This tipping point is different for everybody; the more hypersensitive the lower this point seems to be.

It is important to consider the environment in which we live and work. All of the raw materials needed for life are obtained from it, and those materials must be separated from those that are not needed or that are harmful. Consider a large portion of our

immune function is in the gut. It needs to differentiate approximately 50 tons of food over ones lifetime; that's the equivalent weight of one fully loaded semi truck and 4 large SUV's. This, obviously, is a tremendous environmental load, in addition to what is in the air we breathe. Conditions exist in which airborne allergens can become quite concentrated. This can quickly bring the environmental load up to the tipping point. Along with the allergic reactions in the gut, in addition to the toxic load of air and water pollution, all combine to create conditions that make allergy very likely, if not truly problematic. Therefore, improving the diet, drinking plenty of clean water and reducing the chronically inhaled allergens (house dust, dust mites, animal dander, and mold spores) is large step to reducing allergic reactions.

Overall physical, emotional, and spiritual health does have a lot to do with how much allergies are causing a problem. Physical factors like chronic illness, sedentary lifestyle, acute and prolonged stress, insomnia, dehydration, nutritional deficiencies, living and working in an increasingly polluted environment, smoking, drug and alcohol use, and a myriad of other insults all contribute to the increased sensitivity of environmental influences. Over time these influences wear down our ability to absorb environmental stressors and the ability to recover from them quickly. This accumulated stress can cause us to become maladapted; an inability to maintain an inner balance without losing function. This state puts our immune system into a continuous state of alarm. Generally, these symptoms are acute at first, then become increasingly more chronic over time. Symptoms show up in susceptible organ systems like skin, respiratory, gastrointestinal, central nervous, cardiovascular, lymphatic, endocrine, or musculoskeletal. Acute and chronic allergy often involves more than one these, the lines between them may be quite blurry.

When overall health gets to this stage; in many cases corrective action is required. Always being well rested and hydrated is of highest importance. Making the sleeping environment as clean and stress free as possible, as well as making sustainable changes to the diet are all very important. To do this, nutritional counseling and allergy therapies are often necessary. Unfortunately, there aren't any one size-fits-all solutions to problems of this type. Many of them are directly related to lifestyle; maintaining your health by resting, drinking plenty of clean water, daily recreational exercise, and living a

sustainable lifestyle, are most important in the long term avoidance of allergic and chronic illness. They may sound simplistic or cliché, but are foundational.

Here in Dr. Bonnet's office, The Healing Partnership, we are committed to helping people through these difficult changes; beginning a path of recovery for life. Dr. Bonnet strongly believes if we are able to improve chronic allergies and illness, it enables people to do the necessary things to maintain good health. Your recovery will be a long road, full of ups and downs. With persistence and a positive world view; "I want to feel better this year than I did last year and next year better than this one," recovery is possible.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Will Dr. Bonnet cure my allergies?

No, allergies cannot be cured. Over time, we can decrease your allergic sensitivity and help you to better understand your allergies. This will help you prevent being made very sick by them.

I outgrew my allergies when I was a teenager. Why am I again having a problem with them?

There are occasions when young children have severe allergies, like peanut allergy, and do seem to outgrow these severe reactions as they get older. However, both seasonal and chronic allergies are not out grown. The way symptoms present can change with time, and will tend to be less superficial. For example, the asthma that was a problem during your childhood will have improved, but now shows up as fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, middle/inner ear problems, and joint and muscle pain to name a few. As time goes on, and health erodes, these symptoms may become noticeable again and be quite severe. Traditional medical therapies may not be able to improve them.

Why am I allergic and my parents and grandparents are not?

It is impossible to say for sure; there are a few things that do seem to stand out. The increasing stress of the western lifestyle, chemical exposure, highly refined diet, the

frenetic pace of life, the virtual disappearance of the extended family and the cumulative genetic effects from having lived under these conditions. So in essence, it is of much higher importance to take good care of the health and wellbeing of our body, mind, and spirit. If we are better able to care for ourselves, we are better able to care for others and our environment.

What does better caring for my body, mind, and spirit mean?

Since all three of these aspects affect the other, it's difficult to sum them up in a few words. Nevertheless, many of the things needed for the care of oneself are very well known:

- Get plenty of rest (ideally 8hrs/day)
- Make sleep environment as clean as possible
- Drink plenty of water (2 liters/day for adults)
- Diet low in: white flour, starch, and sugar.

Processed foods

Animal & Trans fats

And high in: complex carbohydrates and fiber.

- 20 minutes of recreational exercise at least 3 days/week.
- Reduce stress at home and at work.
- Meditate daily