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Allergies and Eczema Explained Naturally By: Dr. Michael Mason-Wood ND

In my practice, I specialize in pediatrics and I see children with many common conditions, such as eczema, asthma and allergies, as well as more challenging neurological conditions, such as autism and ADHD. I wanted to share a common occurrence I see in practice and that is the treatment of eczema. A few months ago, a concerned mom brought her 1 year old son in as he had been diagnosed with full body eczema. A medical doctor had prescribed cortisone cream and said “he will grow out of it”. The condition had started at birth and since he was so uncomfortable his mother found that he was extremely fussy and cranky. He was also very itchy and would scratch himself raw given the opportunity. After feeling discouraged with the medical care they received, the parents thought they would explore other avenues of treatment, such as naturopathic medicine.

During the patient intake session, I discovered that he was a C-section birth. He had also been quite colicky as a baby and sometimes could not keep food down. Whenever a child presents with the symptom of colic, a few things come to mind: 1) food intolerances 2) a bacterial or “gut flora” imbalance and 3) spinal disturbances. The other symptoms that occur with food intolerances and an imbalance in gut flora are: eczema, asthma, digestive upset, mood disorders, constipation, difficulty sleeping, and bed wetting. Similar symptoms can also appear in patients who are “toxic” or in those whose organs of detoxification are not working as well as they should. In this case the boy’s trunk looked like red welted hives and I asked if any blood work had been done to rule out a true allergy. It turned out this was never offered, so she decided to do an IgE allergy blood test through our office, as well as stool testing to determine the balance of good and bad bacteria in the digestive tract.

When looking at immune reactions to allergies, there are 5 types that the body can have: IgA, IgG, IgM, IgD, and IgE. Most people are familiar with the IgE antibody response (fast immune mediated) which is when you eat a peanut and your throat immediately closes, or you get hives or an anaphylactic reaction. But there is also an IgG antibody response which is considered a “slow immune” reaction, such as a food intolerance. Most commonly, I test children for food intolerances when they are over 1.5 years of age as this is when their immune systems are more developed and they have built up enough antibodies to give a good response. If I test a child and they are positive, it means they have what is known as “leaky gut syndrome” and I start them on a treatment plan. This includes a dietary plan that eliminates the foods they are reacting to based on their individual test results - most commonly wheat and dairy as these are the most common foods that cause problems.

Another important point in this case is that he was a C-section baby. It is important to note that when a baby is born, it gets its first dose of bacteria when it travels down the vaginal canal. These good bacteria or probiotics colonize the infant’s digestive tract (assuming the mother has a healthy vaginal canal) and serve as part of our lifelong immune system. C-section children do not get this opportunity and therefore usually have a lot more health problems versus their vaginal birth counterparts.¹

In this case, I prescribed the following dietary changes while waiting for the test results: eliminate dairy and wheat from the mom’s diet (as she was still breast feeding) and the solid portion of the child’s diet. As detoxification is also an important part of the process, I also prescribed very gentle liver support that involves a three step process:

Step 1: homeopathic remedies to start the “drainage” or removal of toxins

Step 2: glutathione to help the liver get rid of these toxins and

Step 3: a herbal combination to promote better liver function.

Most parents say to me “My child is only x months old, how can their liver be toxic?”. What people don’t realize is that in today’s society children are being born toxic. They acquire toxins in utero and/or while being breast-fed.² We have five detoxification organs - our liver, kidneys, colon, lungs and skin. If the liver cannot keep up with the removal of toxins, the detoxification process spills onto the other organs and when the entire system is overburdened, symptoms appear such as eczema, asthma or bowel issues.

When I saw the patient a week later to go over the test results, she was impressed how fast his skin had cleared up, he was not as fussy or cranky and seemed to be a more pleasant child. His blood work confirmed the following IgE allergies: peanut, milk, wheat, egg white and soybeans. Based on the stool test results, he also had candida which is a chronic fungal problem. Over time with the correct nutritional support to heal leaky gut syndrome he may be able to eat some of these foods periodically and not get such a severe skin reaction. For more information on Leaky Gut Syndrome – see Dr. Christina Bjorndal’s article:

I have a leaky what? Leaky Gut syndrome explained

<http://www.drchrisbjorndal.com/i-have-a-leaky-what-leaky-gut-explained/>

After one month of treatment, he was doing really well and we started the second phase of treatment to deal with the overgrowth of candida. This meant that further dietary changes were necessary, primarily eliminating all forms of sugar from his diet, including fruits.

This is an example of a case that cleared up quickly, and illustrates the primary philosophy of Naturopathic Medicine which is to address and treat the root cause of disease and to not give things to simply cover up symptoms or palliate. By taking the time to remove the foods that were causing an immune reaction, rebalance the bacterial imbalance in the digestive tract and support the body in detoxification the patient is actually cured of eczema. It is important to remember that symptoms like colic, eczema, and constipation are signals from the body that it is out of balance or over-burdened. When you listen to your body and support it, the healing process has a chance to take place naturally.

1. Low diversity of the gut microbiota in infants with atopic eczema: The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology Volume 129, Issue 2, Pages 434-440.e2, February 2012
2. Environmental Toxins – Do you know your levels? By Dr. Christina Bjorndal:
<http://www.drchrisbjorndal.com/environmental-toxins-do-you-know-your-bodys-levels/>