

Allergy & Sensitivity Testing



What is the difference between an allergy and a sensitivity?

The word allergy is derived from a Greek word, meaning “altered reaction”. When someone has an allergy, they respond to a substance with an altered reaction usually in the form of physical symptoms. The substance that caused this reaction is known as the allergen. Generally, we think of a severe allergy, such a reaction to peanuts leading to anaphylaxis.

However, sometimes the link between substance and reaction occurs more slowly and may affect the gastrointestinal tract or neurological health; these reactions are known as sensitivities. Over time, we have discovered that many diseases and symptoms can be linked to allergies and sensitivities.

Diagnosis of food allergies

Immediate reactions can be easily identified as they often occur in close association with ingestion of the offending food. It is more difficult to diagnose delayed reactions. We test for IgE and IgG antibodies, and at times IgA as well, to determine true allergens (foods that lead to IgE reactions) as well as sensitivities (foods that lead to IgG reactions).

Testing Procedure

During your visit to the lab, the lab technician will perform either a finger prick or a classic blood draw, depending on which test your doctor has ordered. Both test types will take only a few minutes and, once the sample has been taken, your appointment will be complete.

The lab technician will then process the blood and send it to a private lab that works collaboratively with Integrative Naturopathic Medical Centre to test IgG and IgE immunoglobulins using state-of-the-art enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) technique. Generally ninety-five or one hundred and eighty foods will be tested, depending on which option you have discussed with your doctor. Accurate testing requires that you eat a wide range of foods within 3 weeks of the blood test.

The lab will send us a report indicating the levels of antibody your body produced in response to various foods and will suggest if a food is “safe”, best to consume in moderation, or to avoid entirely.

The front desk staff at Integrative will contact you once we have received your results.

Types of Reactions

Immediate Reactions

- Occurs within 3 hours of ingestion
- Due to high IgE antibodies in the blood
- This is what conventional medicine diagnoses as true allergies and is tested for with a prick or scratch test

Delayed Reactions

- Can occur up to several days after ingestion
- Due to high levels of IgG, IgA, IgM, and/or IgD antibodies in the blood that combine with food particles to form "immune complexes"
- These complexes can lead to widespread inflammation and lead to symptoms in the GI tract, headaches, brain fog, skin conditions, joint pain, and many other widespread reactions.

Notes
