



Intolerances and Happiness



Feeling good through controlling intolerances



With the advent of the low-fat diet craze came the obsession with eating huge amounts of carbohydrates. Health professionals and the media suggested that this was the right way to eat, but what perhaps was not understood at the time, was the effect eating such a high amounts of carbohydrates could have on increasing overall body fat (e.g. by not limiting the amount of carbohydrates consumed). If you eat an excessive amount of carbohydrates your body can no longer use it as an energy source and ends up storing the unused by-product as fat.

The second problem that has emerges as a result of the high carbohydrate diet (or at least as a result of a dramatic change in diets), is the development of wheat intolerances and illness such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). This condition is often associated with excess bloating, wind pain, constipation and/or diarrhoea, particularly during times of stress. These bowel problems are due to the body's inability to digest/break down food in the body. With this illness comes the inability to eat certain foods during times of stress. Furthermore, many people develop negative emotional responses to their intolerances (e.g. depression, anxiety and anger). This condition now affects approximately 10-20% of the adult population worldwide and seems to be associated with an increase in stress due to the pressures of modern living.

Many people are intolerant to wheat and dairy these days. The best thing to do is to keep a food diary and jot down how you feel after you consume particular foods (see the example below).

Food Diary

Date	Time	Food I ate	What I drank	How I felt before eating	How I felt after eating
1/1/06	12:00	Salad sandwich	Diet coke	a bit stressed at work	Bloated
2/1/06	12:00	Salad sandwich	Water	a bit stressed at work	Not too bad, but still a bit bloated
3/1/06	12:00	Chicken salad with lite dressing	Water	a bit stressed at work	Perfectly fine

Write out your diary as per above and make sure you give yourself a week to see if there are any patterns. You will soon start to realise which foods do not agree with you. In the above example, both the soft drink and the bread in the sandwich appear to be resulting in bloating after eating. Now, it doesn't mean that you'll have to avoid these foods forever, but in the short-term, your moods and physical symptoms will be dramatically increased simply by either eliminating certain foods or substituting them (e.g. sour dough or rye instead of wheat and soy products instead of dairy).

Of course it's important to talk to your doctor, or naturopath before you eliminate whole food groups, as you may have an intestinal illness such as IBS, which can be treated with appropriate medical and/or behavioural intervention.

Reference

1. Rolfes, S.R., Pinna, K., & Whitney, E. (2006). *Understanding Normal and Clinical Nutrition*. Thomson Higher Education, Belmont, USA.

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