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How To Live An Allergy Free Life

When I was a kid, I suffered a bad case of asthma. Fortunately, it was never a life and death situation, but severe enough to prevent me from having a normal life. The attack occurred often in the middle of the night in bed. I remember myself being on my knees, my elbows and head down to the pillow, wheezing and coughing, trying to cough out a mucus mess from my lungs all night long. It was miserable. Not to mention, getting a decent amount of air into my lungs was a struggle. My condition began to improve significantly as I was seriously getting into sports activities during middle school.

I thought to myself, "Building stronger lungs from high aerobic activities must be the key to defeating asthma." So, I kept at it. However, my allergy conditions like, runny nose, itchy eyes, eczema all got worse during the same period. And they persisted throughout my teen age years and into my late twenties. There was a time I even had to use nasal spray just to keep my runny nose from dripping onto everything I touched. My nose and eyes were always red, my lips were so dry, chapped and swollen that I couldn't even open my mouth wide to eat. I know now, and I sort of knew back then, that bad eating and drinking and smoking habits had something to do with my terrible health. But what I didn't know was that all of my allergy symptoms including asthma (I didn't know asthma was also allergic reaction) were triggered by the substance called Histamine.

Histamines play an essential role in the body's immune response in a number of ways. For example, they trigger the mucus-producers—called "goblet cells" to create more mucus. The goal of the mucus production is to create a wetter, more fluid environment, so that allergens can be trapped and carried away from the body. Many people suffer from allergy symptoms like a runny nose, watery/itchy eyes on the daily basis because of our body's defense mechanism. In the case of asthma, histamines overreact and produce far more mucus than needed. They are also responsible for the inflammation which exacerbate the constriction of the airway.

Many people are allergic to certain foods, most notoriously peanuts, as well as airborne allergen like dust, mold and pollens. If your histamine tolerance level is very low you must stay away from them as much as possible.

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Hen Sen Herbs

LIFESTYLE LETTER

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Quotes of the month

"Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word happy would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness. It is far better to take things as they come along with patience and equanimity."

- Carl Jung

This month in history

August 4th 2010, A vault containing non-words - those rejected by the Oxford English Dictionary - is uncovered.

August 4th 2010, Alex Rodriguez of the New York Yankees becomes the seventh player in the history of Major League Baseball to hit 600 home runs.

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When Doing Something Scary Is Good For You

Have you ever heard that facing your fears is good for you? Well, I had the chance to do just that during something called the Warrior Dash. It's a 5k obstacle course run - or about 3 miles of running and a dozen obstacles from crawling in mud under barbed wire to using rope to scale a 25-foot wall and over it. Last Christmas, a group of my cousins signed up, and asked me to join them. At first, I wasn't sure since I am not much of a runner and don't do any weight lifting. For exercise, I prefer yoga and dancing. But, I figured, this would be a good chance to face my fears and have a group of people around for moral support.

Well, I meant to start training but the months slipped by until I was about 2 weeks away from the race. So, I tried running a mile, and made myself walk as fast as I could to see how long it would take me to do the nearly 3 mile course. I showed up for the Warrior Dash knowing I could at least walk it in 45 minutes, but had no idea what to expect with the obstacles. I woke up an hour before my alarm went off full of nervous energy to get going!

Once the race started, I found myself at a pace behind a group of cousins, and in front of another group. I decided to pace with the slightly slower ones so that I didn't exhaust myself before we started the obstacles. We ran through sand, forest and mud for about a mile and a half before our first set of 4 obstacles. They were challenging to the mind, being up high and crawling through mud, basically pushing our comfort levels. Once we were past that set, the adrenaline rush of making it past them pushed us with renewed energy!

The very last obstacle was sliding down a very, very tall slide about 3 stories tall into a pit of muddy water. My cousin said she couldn't do it as my mind was thinking, "It's so far down!" But, we were almost done. So, we got ready, sat side by side, and slid down at the same time which helped both of us get over our fear to finish! We completed the Warrior Dash in an hour. I was surprised I could actually do the whole race. I didn't get stuck. I didn't get hurt. I didn't give up.

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How To Live An Allergy Free Life

The Healing Power Of Gratitude - An essay by Aysen Rose

I am grateful to be alive today. I'm grateful for the warm breeze and for the snap pea flowers blooming in my garden. I'm grateful that my family is healthy and happy and that we all love each other, even imperfectly. I'm grateful that I have food to eat. I'm grateful that I have a safe, comfortable shelter and I have a car to drive. I'm grateful that I have time and resources to teach my son how to drive. I'm grateful I have a job and I have friends who love and care about me. I'm grateful for the farmers who grow my food and the workers who pick it and pack it and ship it to my store. I'm grateful for the rainfall and the beauty of the bird song. I'm grateful for the air I breathe. It is freely made and freely given to me by the trees. My life is rich.



In the hustle and bustle of daily life though, it is easy to forget this feeling of contentment and gratitude. In the scramble to make a living, be a single parent, meet all of my daily obligations and responsibilities it is very easy to focus on what I don't have and all that is not perfect in my life. Living in the U.S., it's easy to take fresh water from a tap for granted. It's easy to try to work harder, drive faster and sleep less in search of the illusive "more". Exhausted and depleted, it's easy to sit on the couch and "binge watch" so I can have some "me" time to decompress from the stress. Un-managed stress has a huge cost. In my job as a health care practitioner I see the effects of stress every day. Increased pain in the body, heart disease, overeating, strokes, diminished immune systems, loss of time from work, and diminished sense of satisfaction and fulfillment with life. The simple, quick and powerful antidote to modern stress is to take a few moments every day and practice gratitude.

Science is now proving what wisdom traditions all over the world have known forever: Positive emotions such as love, compassion and gratitude are good for us, body and mind. The Institute of HeartMath have conducted ground breaking studies into the intelligence of the heart. Their discoveries include such facts as that the heart is a brain onto itself, full of the same neurons found in the brain. It's not just a pump as previously thought but part of the endocrine system responding to and sending out hormones into the body. At the Institute they measured the effects of a single self-generated episode of love, compassion and gratitude and found that in 5-15 minutes of focusing on these emotions there is a boost in the immune system, immediate decrease in stress hormones, improved heart rate for longevity and increased mental clarity and efficiency which can last up to 6 hours (1). These positive emotions can be self-initiated at any moment in our lives. We don't have to wait for outside circumstances to trigger a loving, compassionate or grateful state. We can experience the benefits of a slower heart rate and clearer thinking anytime and in their book, "The HeartMath Solution", the researchers give several scientifically proven techniques.

Here is one of my favorite ways to tap into the power of gratitude. This is wonderful to do outside in the morning. You can try it with me now if you'd like: Take a deep breath in and slowly exhale, do this a few more times. As your breathing slows, bring your awareness to the area around your heart and continue to breathe in slowly and gently. Gently bring to your mind's eye the things and people for which you are grateful. It can be small, ordinary things: a meal, a loving pet, a home, a garden, a job opportunity, trees, water, gas in the car, doing work you love, the beautiful sunshine. Once you start listing what you are grateful for, your list will grow. Let yourself do this for at least 5 minutes, and see what you notice. Writing down a gratitude is list also a great way to access the benefits of the healing power of gratitude.

Enjoy and thanks for reading!

When Doing Something Scary Is Good For You continued from page 1

Adam Braun once said, **"When you get out of your comfort zone you start to find out who you really are."**

And, I learned that I'm a lot stronger than I realized. What are you afraid of? Try facing it (in a safe but scary way) and see if you have strength you didn't know you had! I bet you'll be surprised.

Warmly,
Holli Margell, Editor



Juli's Healthy Living Corner

For a couple of weeks, my health has been getting weaker. I went to see my massage therapist, I call her grandma. She scolded me as she saw how weak I have become. Quickly, she started cupping me to loosen my whole back and as she got to my kidney region I had screamed that I can't handle the pain, but instead of listening to me she increased the cupping. No Pain, no gain. My problem was I don't eat enough to drink strong tea, as it will cause me a Kidney deficiency. I am fairly slim, no fat to burn. I can't drink or am forbidden to drink Oolong Tea and my body type can only handle Pu-erh tea or Jasmine tea as it is an tonic to my digestion. I am very thankful to have great people around me as I also need to be reminded or scolded once in a while. I am only human. Create that great circle of people around you. I am at 90% recovered and it feels great to feel good again. I love being healthy and I wish that for all my patients (my family).

Love, juli



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However, what I found was quite surprising to me. It turned out that most of the food we eat regularly have a certain level of histamine in them. Some of the food contains high level of histamine, and some have low levels. And some foods cause our body to release histamine as they enter our digestive system. Another fact I found about histamine was quite shocking to me. The level of histamine increases as the food gets stale. It means that the left-over meal that has been sitting in the refrigerator for a few days has much higher level of histamine compared to a freshly prepared meal. So, the left over dinner for tomorrow's lunch is not recommended if your allergy symptoms are severe. So let's take a look at list of commonly consumed foods that contains higher level of histamine.

Histamine-Rich Foods

Fermented alcoholic beverage, especially wine, champagne and beer; sauerkraut, vinegar, soy sauce, kefir, yogurt, cheese, sour cream, butter milk, dried fruits (apricots, prunes, dates, figs, raisins), most citrus fruits, walnuts, cashews, and peanuts, avocados, egg plant, spinach, tomatoes .

Histamine Releasing Foods:

Alcohol, bananas, chocolate, cow's milk, nuts, papaya, pineapple, shellfish, strawberries, tomatoes, wheat germ, artificial preservatives and dyes.

Low-Histamine Foods:

Freshly cooked meat, poultry, freshly caught fish, gluten-free grains (rice, quinoa), mango, pear, watermelon, apple, kiwi, cantaloupe, grapes, fresh vegetables (except for the ones listed above).

You'd better not eat me.....



You may not have obvious allergic reactions to histamine rich foods if your histamine tolerance level is high. But, remember that inflammation from histamine can cause other symptoms like headaches/migraines, difficulty falling asleep, sluggish digestion, nausea, fatigue, abnormal menstrual cycle and many others. So, please pay close attention to your body's response to certain foods or allergens. In many cases, outcomes from histamine reaction are subtle and often benign. But they may accumulate and turn into something serious if you don't take care of it early.

For those who suffer from chronic allergy conditions, we have herbal pills called AE. Many people have reported back to me during severe allergy season that their allergy symptoms were so much better with regular intake of AE. As for me, my digestion improved overnight because of AE. It took me a while to figure out that my entire digestive system was inflamed and swollen because of the histamine rich foods. Bloating, indigestion, sluggishness, tightness around the abdomen are no longer an issue. Even inflammation in anal area is gone. Thus, no pain. (For those who are new to our newsletter, I wrote an article about my battle with hemorrhoid and the solution in the past issue. You can view the past issues at www.hensenherbs.com/resources/newsletter-archive)

-Kaz Isogai