

A Brief History of Food Allergies

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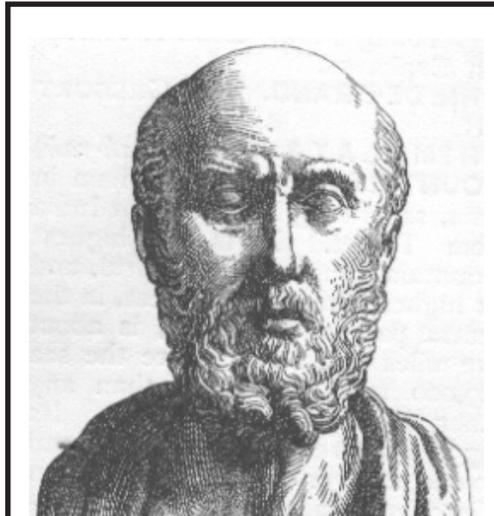
It is relevant, pertinent, and quite important to provide a brief review of the history of food allergy. This chapter is included to give you power in the form of information so that you can begin to explore your relationship to food as it relates to your health and wellness. For more than two thousand years there has been medical recognition that food can cause illnesses, diseases and health concerns for some people. Hippocrates was a Greek physician who is considered to be the Father of Medicine according the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*. Over two thousand years ago Hippocrates¹ wrote about the negative effects that food could have on different people:

“For cheese does not prove equally injurious to all men, for there are some who can take it to satiety, without being hurt by it in the least, but, on the contrary, it is wonderful what strength it imparts to those it agrees with; but there are some who do not bear it well, their constitutions are different, they differ in this respect, that what in their body is incompatible with cheese, is roused and put in commotion by such a thing; and those in whose bodies such a humor happens to prevail in greater quantity and intensity, are likely to suffer the more from it. But if the thing had been pernicious to the whole nature of man, it would have hurt all.”

What this quotation from Hippocrates means to you as a consumer is that since the beginning of medicine there has been a significant acknowledgment that food can cause health problems. This is not the society that we live in today. For the most part, this knowledge base, which is rich with substantial scientific research, has

all but disappeared from our culture. For that reason, I believe that it is important for consumers to have an understanding of the history of food allergies as it has evolved over time. Historically, physicians were recognized for being able to treat their patients’ illnesses by diet manipulation. That means that throughout history, doctors treated illness by changing a patient’s diet. An example of this written approximately 200 years ago and credited to Matthew Baillie² is as such:

“To judge of the true skill and merit of a physician requires a competent knowledge of the science of medicine itself; but to gain the good opinion of the patient or his friends, there is perhaps no method so ready as to show expertness in the regulation of the diet of the sick. Discretion and judgment will, of course, be required; the rules should not be unnecessarily severe or rigid, otherwise they will not be followed; but the prudent physician will prescribe such laws as though not the best are yet the best that will be obeyed.”



Hippocrates

ca. 460 BC – ca. 370 BC

What Dr. Baillie is addressing in the above quotation is that doctors of that time would recommend

changes in a patient’s diet to help relieve symptoms of illness and that the dietary changes would have to be such that they were not so complicated that the patient would follow the recommended changes.

Moving into the early 1900’s there is a plethora of medical writings that support the fact that foods are a problem for some individuals and can cause a whole host of medical illnesses and diseases. One of the physicians who made substantial contributions to the

area of food allergies was Dr. Francis Hare of Brisbane, Australia. In 1905 Dr. Hare wrote a two-volume 1,000 page book titled *The Food Factor in Disease*³ which was a result of his observation in 1889 that migraine headache incidentally was relieved when the patient was put on a special diet that largely excluded fats, carbohydrates, and saccharine alcoholic drinks. Dr. Francis Hare sought to explain that a whole host of diseases were related to food allergies including migraine, asthma, gout, nervousness, epilepsy, mania, dyspepsia, biliousness, headache, bronchitis, eczema, hypertension, gastrointestinal disturbances and other degenerative diseases.

But Dr. Hare was only one of many physicians that were discovering what Hippocrates had written over two thousand years before. In 1906, Dr. Clemens von Pirquet⁴ suggested the use of the word “allergy” to describe an inappropriate reaction to food or other substances not typically harmful or bothersome. A physician in England, Dr. Alfred Schofield, wrote in 1908 about successfully treating a boy who suffered from angioedema and asthma because of an allergy to eggs.⁵ Dr. Keston, Dr. Walters, and Dr. Hopkins confirmed this egg desensitization.⁶ Thus, a hundred years ago physicians were successfully treating patients with food allergies.

New York physician Oscar Schloss reported a similar experience as that of Dr. Schofield in 1912.⁷ In 1917, the *Journal of Urology* published an article by Dr. Longcope and Dr. Rachemann describing six patients who reacted to foods with urticaria and renal insufficiency.⁸ *The Archives of Internal Medicine*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and *Annals of Clinical Medicine* would all publish medical articles on the relationship between food and medical illnesses by Dr. W. W. Duke from 1921 to 1923.^{9, 10, 11}

A major contributor to the study and advancement of food allergies was Dr. Albert Rowe who in 1931 published a book called *Food Allergy: Its Manifestations, Diagnosis, and Treatment*.¹² Dr. Rowe documented that food allergies can cause a wide range of symptoms affecting any part of the body, and that allergies can show up at any age. Forty-one years later, Dr. Rowe and his son co-authored a follow-up book on

food allergies titled *Food Allergy: Its Manifestations and Control and the Elimination Diets – A Compendium*.¹³

Dr. Warren T. Vaughan began studying food allergies in 1932. Dr. Vaughan studied an entire village of 508 people who lived in and around Clover, Virginia in 1934. Of the population that he studied, ten percent had allergies severe enough to require medical attention and another 50 percent had minor allergies, which meant that 60 percent of the population studied, had some degree of allergy. Dr. Vaughan took his survey one step further and looked at the possible causes for the allergies. Of the 60 percent with major and minor allergies that were able to attribute symptoms to definite causes, “62.6 percent reacted to foods, 23 percent to inhalants, and 14.4 percent to contact allergies.”¹⁴

In 1941, Dr. Vaughan published a book called *Strange Malady*¹⁵ in which he presents the multiple manifestations of food allergy and the interplay of food reactions with other environmental exposures and concealed excitants. In *Strange Malady*, Dr. Vaughan states three key points: food allergies or sensitivities are

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the most common form of human allergy; a person can become sensitized to any food; and it is unusual to be allergic to just one food. Several years later in 1948 Dr. Vaughan published a book called *Practice of Allergy*¹⁶ further adding to the knowledge of food allergy that already existed.

Also making additional substantial contributions to books published on the topic of food allergies and allergies in general was a Dr. Arthur Coca. Dr. Coca authored *Familial Nonreaginic Food Allergy* in three editions, which were published in 1942,¹⁷ 1945,¹⁸ and 1953.¹⁹ One of Dr. Coca’s significant observations was that exposure to food allergens resulted in a change in the pulse of the human body. *The Pulse Test* was published as a tool for the layman in 1956.²⁰

The Pulse Test outlines the direct relationship between food allergies and backaches, headaches, epilepsy, diabetes, ulcers, hemorrhoids, obesity, hives, fatigue, migraine, high blood pressure, depression, and even multiple sclerosis with the most fascinating case histories and references to successfully treated patients. (We purchased a used copy of *The Pulse Test* on-line and were extremely pleased with the information contained in this easy-to-read book written by Dr. Coca.)

Dr. Arthur Coca was not just any other allergist who discovered that food allergies had a significant relationship to illness, diseases, and health and well-being. Dr. Coca had more accomplishments than most medical physicians ever accrue. Dr. Coca was the founder and first editor of the *Journal of Immunology*, which is still the foremost medical publication in its field. He also served on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Allergy*, the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, and the *Journal of Applied Nutrition*. He taught at Cornell, the University of Pennsylvania and Post-Graduate studies at Columbia University. He was also Honorary President of the American Association of Immunologists. And he was a member of many other medical organizations such as the American Association for Cancer Research, the American Society for the Study of Allergy, and the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine. Dr. Coca and the other pioneers in allergy were no ordinary physicians; they had more credentials than most physicians had at the time, or have now currently.

Yet another major contributor to the field of food allergies was a physician by the name of Dr. Herbert Rinkel who did work beginning in the 1930's. *Food Allergy*, published in 1951 by Dr. Rinkel, Dr. Theron G. Randolph, and Dr. Zeller, was a comprehensive book covering the nature and cyclic concept of food allergy, the deliberate feeding test and the rotary diet.²¹

According to Dr. Lawrence D. Dickey,²² "Dr. Rinkel's last major contribution had to do with the symptom-provoking and relieving food test." It was presented at the **First International Congress on Food and Digestive Allergy** in 1963²³ nine days after his death. Dr. Rinkel's presentation was delivered by Dr. Dor Brown. This presentation speaks to the worldwide recognition that

exists for Dr. Rinkel and his co-authors' work. It also speaks to the global recognition that food allergies are a significant problem.

Dr. Rinkel's observations of reactions to two closely spaced feedings after at least 4½ days of avoidance of that particular food can be traced back to Hippocrates who wrote over two thousand years ago:

"Such persons, provided they take dinner when it is not their wont, immediately become heavy and inactive, both in body and mind, and are weighed down with yawning, slumbering, and thirst: and if they take supper in addition, they are seized with flatulence, tormina, and diarrhea, and to many this has been the commencement of a serious disease, when they have merely taken twice a day the same food which they have been in the custom of taking once."...

Hippocrates also wrote:

*"...if a patient fast for the first two or three days and take food of a heavy nature on the fourth and fifth, he will be much injured."*²⁴

This reference from Hippocrates and later Dr. Rinkel and other notable physicians provides the foundation for rotation diets. **Rotation diets** are a concept where you do not eat the same foods every day, but rather you have a system for eating specific foods every four or so days. This cookbook provides detailed information on rotation diets and instruction on how to set up your own rotation diet.

An internationally known and renowned allergist who made remarkable contributions to the field was a Dr. Theron G. Randolph. While Dr. Randolph did not begin in private allergy practice until 1939, his interest in allergy was clearly evident when he attended a national allergy meeting during his senior year of medical school in 1933. During that same time he also attended a national meeting of the **American Association of Immunologists**, and heard the presidential address of Dr. Arthur F. Coca, a man with whom Dr. Randolph would later become friends. Dr. Randolph was the third person trained through a Fellowship offered by the Harvard Medical School and

Massachusetts General Hospital.

Dr. Randolph's bibliography of published articles and presentations is both extensive and diverse. Throughout the course of his career, Dr. Randolph published and presented over 393 articles, books, or presentations.²⁵ He was known around the world, speaking at meetings such as the 1st and 3rd International Congress of Social Psychiatry, the First International Congress on Food and Digestive Allergy in Vichy, France, and 3rd World Congress of Psychiatry to name a few. Dr. Randolph was also called upon to provide his testimony to the United States Government on several different aspects of allergy during the course of his brilliant career—one that incorporated relationships with Dr. Coca, Dr. Rowe, and Dr. Rinkel.

Depending on how you enter Theron Randolph, M.D.'s name into a World Wide Web search engine, you will get a range of hits from 74,000 to 122,000 or more. If you spend the time to look up many of these hits, you will eventually encounter pages that are in foreign languages. Dr. Theron Randolph was an internationally known pioneer in the field of allergy. The importance and significance of Dr. Randolph's work has been recognized by Harvard where Dr. Randolph's medical papers and writings are archived in one of their many medical libraries. This underlines the stature and credibility of a leader who dedicated his life to understanding the root causes of allergies.

To put the medical research of the early 1900's into perspective relative to life at that time, things were very, very different. At the turn of the century there were no cars zooming around the United States, as that would come later. Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Company in 1903 with the first Model "T" being produced in 1908. The Manhattan Bridge would not be completed until 1910. The Holland Tunnel and Lincoln Tunnel, which connect New York State and New Jersey for automobile transportation, would not be completed until 1927 and 1937 respectively. A refrigeration process for meat cargo was not developed until 1934, which meant that you had to obtain your meat from a place close to where you lived.

In these early days of medicine and allergy, there were no computers, no short wave radio, no televisions, and

no mass transportation systems. But there was also no pollution from automobiles, trains and airplanes; no preservatives or mass-produced foods; and few chemicals and pesticides.

There was no plastic. Life was radically different in the early days of the 1900's. A physician would make an observation in his medical

practice, from which he or she would develop a theory or hypothesis. The physicians of the time would then test their theories out with their patients. Physicians practiced independently prior to the advances of the railways, automobiles, and airplanes. Yet, for over two thousand years physicians independently came up with the same conclusions all over the world: food allergies can cause illness, disease and poor health.

There was also a recognition that people react differently to foods, and that a food, which is a problem for one person, may not be a problem for another person. In the past, physicians were judged by their ability to treat their sick patients through diet manipulation. The vast majority of the current medical profession knows very little about food allergy symptoms, the ways that foods can negatively impact an individual's health and the diseases related to food allergies. It is certainly less expensive, not to mention less invasive, to rule out food allergies in the course of helping a patient who is experiencing health concerns. However this is not routinely done in the present medical establishment in the United States.

Most allergists only test for IgE (immediate and more serious) allergies, which accounts for only 5-10% of food allergies. Most people with serious and immediate reactions already know that they have a problem with food and they usually know the source. It has been stated that IgE mediated food allergies will present within one hour of food ingestion. Delayed food allergies account for 90-95% of food allergies. This is the one area of allergy that is sadly lacking in terms of the availability of treatment options, recognition of

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prevalence, and acknowledgement of the wide variety of illnesses and diseases that are due to delayed allergies. It is medically documented that delayed food allergies are the most difficult to pinpoint because of their cyclic nature and because of a medical phenomenon called “masking.”

Some delayed food reactions will not appear for several hours while others will appear after two or more days. Therefore without a complete elimination diet or medical testing, it is nearly impossible for a patient to discern if a reaction experienced from food was from that day or day’s prior. Elimination diets are difficult for patients to do and are impacted by noncompliance. Deliberate food tests or challenges are extremely time and labor intensive and have other issues as well. It was because of this exact issue that more precise and comprehensive testing, known as intradermal neutralization testing, came into existence.

A relatively recent study demonstrated that 93% of 88 children with severe, frequent migraines recovered on a special diet.²⁶ Another article reviews 40 children with

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severe eczema that had not responded to conventional treatment, yet 100% of these 40 children improved on a hypoallergenic diet.²⁷ These medical conditions have been

historically proven to be related to food allergy, but today it is as if the authors of such recent studies have “discovered” some new phenomenon.

The list of physical illnesses, diseases and health related problems that can be explained primarily by this type of allergy includes asthma, hay fever, itchy skin, headaches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, hives, stomach pain, irrational behavior, edema (swelling), hyperactivity, muscle pain, joint pain, reflux esophagitis or acid reflux, back pain, acne, phlebitis, arthritis, anxiety, mood swings, dizziness or tingling sensations, diarrhea or persistent bowel problems, bad breath, constant congestion, irritating twitches, eczema, depression, inability to concentrate, and behavioral and emotional problems. While there

is no question that currently there is no mainstream conversation about the importance and impact of food allergies on health, illness and disease, that fact does not erase over two thousand years of medical literature, research, and proof that food allergies can be a serious problem to many people.

As the saying goes, when we forget history we are destined to repeat it. When individuals recognize that foods can affect how they feel, they begin to have the power to explore what foods could be problematic for themselves or their family. Many organizations have recognized that special diets can bring relief from health issues. Some of the special diets recommended by consumer groups are covered in this cookbook under the **Special Diets** section. There is much more that could be written about the history of food allergy as it is an expansive field of knowledge. I do believe that this is a sufficient history for most consumers to come to understand that for centuries, physicians around the world have written extensively about how food can negatively impact health and wellness in human beings.

The information in this document came from a medical paper that I wrote a few years ago when I was pursuing health insurance coverage for one of my children. I ran across bits and pieces of the history of food allergy in a variety of medical papers from our local medical library. Several of the medical papers had a paragraph or a few sentences that I found to be amazing. I then pieced together the history of food allergy based on the various references. If I had more time, money or interest, I'm sure a whole book could be written on the subject. For people like myself, this is enough data and background to point to the conclusion that food can indeed affect your health and wellness.

— Lisa A. Lundy
The Super Allergy Girl Cookbook

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