

“Stop! You Can’t Eat That...”

HEALTH

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For the past few years, I have experienced (prepare yourself for a little tmi) serious bloating, stomach pain and uncommon headaches. A year ago, a new year’s resolution with a friend had me going the gym at least 4 times a week to maintain a healthy lifestyle, hoping this routine could decrease these symptoms.



A few months into my active routine there was no difference in my weight, despite my having bumped up my cardio and weight training significantly. So, when the arrow on the scale still refused to shift to the left, I decided to keep a calorie-counter to see if overeating was the culprit- it wasn’t.

There were ultrasounds; many conversations with doctors and not many have had anything to say. Friends and Family, offered, “Maybe you have a food intolerance?” So, I started tracking my diet in an effort to determine what exactly my body was sensitive to.

After one week, I felt overwhelmed and no closer to solving this puzzle.

It was time to call in a professional.

Naturopathic doctor Mubina Jiwa acknowledged that finding a clear answer might be even harder than anticipated. “A food intolerance you notice up to three days after eating the food and you might not know what it is. You could eat bananas today and turkey tomorrow and three days later you might notice something and you would have no idea what it was. It’s a bit of a different immune mechanism and because of that it is difficult to isolate and detect.” According to Jiwa, I am not alone. 30 per cent of Canadians experience food intolerance and they are not always the most obvious culprits, which is usually gluten.

“At Hemocode we did a survey of 2,000 patients in 2010 and looked at the most common intolerances the top 10 were pork, banana, peanuts, wheat, aspartame and then wheat flour, coffee, cocoa beans, orange and tangerine.” The most important thing was to fully understand, what exactly happens to one’s insides when they have food intolerance? “The way I try to explain it to people is imagine you are scratching your hand and you scratch your hand for a certain period of time and after a while it starts to become red and raw and inflamed and if you stop and give it a couple of days it will heal over and that is what happens in your intestines,” says Jiwa. If you are currently trying to figure out if you may have a food intolerance the list of symptoms include: uncommon headaches, bloating, pain in your joints, any conditions related to inflammation can worsen, ie: eczema, arthritis and the inability to lose those last 10 pounds.

Naturally, the next step was to take a test that would scan my blood and test up to 250 foods to pinpoint my intolerances. The people at Hemocode monitor the blood for three days to check for moderate and severe intolerances.

After my bloated stomach and I waited for about a week, we were relieved when we saw the results. With more than 50 foods listed under moderate intolerances, including common ingredients, such as baker’s yeast, honey, most cheeses, milk and egg yolks and severe intolerances including one of my favourite vegetables, mushroom, as well as aspartame, chives and 14 others. I realized that most of my diet consisted of foods that irritated my intestine!

Hemocode advised me to cut out the moderate intolerances for up to 12 weeks and severe intolerances for up to a year to make sure everything is healed. They even included some recipes to ensure I stay away from my hazardous foods.

Ever since I cut out these foods, I have no longer experienced pain in my abdomen and my stomach no longer bloated.

Though my symptoms were very severe, not everyone's will be. But just because you don't feel them doesn't mean you don't have an intolerance that could potentially catch up to you in the long run.

If testing is something you would like to investigate, take the test at any Rexall pharmacy or visit Hemocode's website. If you have extended healthcare, it may cover the cost.