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WINTER Newsletter

As we start our new year, we wish all our clients and colleagues the best in health and happiness for 2007! Remember to sign up for the newsletter online at www.armstrongclinic.com to help us save paper.

Healthy Notes:

Income Tax Time is upon us – remember to collect and retain all receipts from our clinic for your accountant. Should you need a summary from 2006 of your visit fees, please let us know 24 hours in advance and we can prepare that for you. The cost is $25.

While the temperatures remain unseasonably warm, our exposure to viruses is unseasonably enhanced. It is important to actually have cold minus 5 or lower outdoor temperatures which will kill off viruses that are attached to the items we come into daily physical contact. While we remain in a nice comfortable warm winter, so do the viruses that attack our immune system. WHEN the temperatures drop, keep in mind to dress warmly (scarf, hat and gloves or mittens, washed weekly), have good personal hygiene, and maintain your anti-viral supplement dose for the benefit of your immune system.

Flu Season is upon us, with February being peak flu month. Prevent the flu 'n you from coming together by re-dosing your homeopathic flu shot at The Armstrong Clinic. Please call ahead to book your appointment.

Allergy season is around the corner. If you suffer from seasonal allergies or have chronic sinus inflammation, NOW is the time to start boosting your immune system with things like Vitamin A, C, E, Selenium and Zinc, as well as Quercitin and Essential Fatty Acids. Long-term use of these important nutrients in therapeutic doses has a wonderful effect of reducing one's allergy and sinus symptoms.

Spring Detoxification and cleanses should be done in the spring for the best results. Organ Detoxification and cleansing is a challenge to the immune system, and hence should not be done in winter, when the flu and colds are at their highest occurrence. If a spring organ detoxification is of interest to you please seek the professional guidance of a registered Naturopathic Doctor to assist you in achieving your detoxification goals.

New Year's Resolutions: Suggestions from Drs. Heidi and Sean Armstrong

Do only two things this year and everything else will become easier for your long-term health. They are focused around the concept that prevention is better than cure. While they may not be very fun immediately, these two resolutions can add life to your years!

1. Regular deep breathing via exercise, diaphragmatic breathing, yogic breathing, progressive relaxation, Tai Chi, and more sleep before midnight.

Deep breathing increases the **cellular oxygen** levels in your body tissues, thereby allowing better metabolism, improved ability to manage daily stress, elimination of toxins, improved cellular repair, decreased free radical damage, and improved concentration.

2. Increased water intake – half your weight in pounds is the number of ounces of water you should drink daily. (Example: 150lbs = 75 oz water daily).

Water is the source of transportation for all the nutrients needed for ongoing life in the cells of your body, as well as the method of elimination for all wastes from these cells. Dehydration in general allows toxin build-up, which puts extra pressure on your immune system to neutralize and eliminate toxins via the lymphatic and blood circulation. Optimal water intake allows your blood and lymphatic systems to function at their best efficiency, and thereby reducing the overall toxin level in the body.

Major Benefits of a Thermography: A summary

Timeliness

Problems with tissue function can be found before structural abnormalities are seen on mammograms. Early detection provides the best outcomes.

Inclusive

Examines the whole chest, breast and armpit areas. Good for all breast types: young/dense, fibrocystic, women on HRT.

Precise

Locates exact problem area allowing for more precise focus with other medical diagnostic tests: ultrasound, mammogram, MRI.

No Risk

No harmful rays emitted so can be done as often as needed without risk.

No Pain

No squeezing, no pressure, no touching by equipment or technician.

Further Reading:

Keyserlingk, J.R. Infrared Imaging of the Breast: Initial Reappraisal Using High-Resolution Digital Technology in 100 Successive Cases of Stage 1 and Stage 2 Breast Cancer, Breast Journal, July/August 1998, Vol.4 no. 4.

www.thermascan.com – articles and sample scans by Dr. Phil Hoekstra III PhD. Of ThermaScan Inc.

The Naturopathic Philosophy Regarding Fevers: Principles and Treatment

Treatment of fevers comes up with a lot of our acute diseases at our clinic, and our recommendations for managing a fever are a little different from the recommendations you may be getting from friends, family, or other medical practitioners. Below is more information about why a fever is central to fighting off infectious disease successfully. The short version is available at our clinic in the form of a patient education handout, which you may ask for the next time you are in.

Fever is defined as an increase in body temperature resulting from an elevation in the thermoregulatory 'set point'. It is not the same as a temperature elevation from exercise, a sauna, steam bath, heat stroke, etc. It does have very much to do with germ theory and emphasis is placed on the terrain (the immune cells) being able to fight the germ.

The first stage of the feve: Chills and goosebumps – is it cold in here or is it just me?

The body creates fever during infectious disease processes when an immune cell from the body called a macrophage breaks it down and digests a microbial product from the infecting organism. This microbial product is clinically known as an exogenous pyrogen. The result of this 'digestion' is the release of another cell from the immune system called interleukin 1. This is called the endogenous pyrogen, and produces the actual fever by traveling through the blood to the hypothalamus to create Prostaglandin E2, which causes the body temperature 'set point' to be turned up. The body now perceives the normal temperature is too low and begins to generate more heat by

1. shivering and putting into circulation more thyrotropin-releasing hormone (TRH)
2. conserving heat by vasoconstriction at the periphery of the body, and
3. by creating goosebumps on the skin, which inhibits sweating.

The sympathetic nervous system controls and coordinates all of these steps to create shivering/chills.

High Temperatures: The second stage of the fever.

As the body temperature elevates, white blood cell production is increased as is its rate of white blood cell release into the circulation. At the same time, white blood cell mobility and killing ability is enhanced, the production of interferon is increased and antibody production increases up to 20 times. While the fever continues to put out the army of the immune system, it is also creating an inhospitable environment for the invading germs. Blood concentrations of iron are decreased, which inhibits bacterial growth.

Regarding the actual temperature created by a fever, below are a few guidelines to consider:

- Normal Temperatures for human beings: 98.6 F
- Optimal Fever Temperature for fighting infectious disease: 102-103 F

If you fast a fever, it will never get too high. If you feed a feverish person or child, you are interfering with the body's attempt to overcome the illness.

- Dehydration becomes a serious concern and warrants a trip to the Emergency Room at the Hospital: 104-107 F
- Frankly dangerous fevers: over 107 F

The Skin: Heat Production and Heat Elimination

Cooling the skin by conduction (cool compresses) and evaporation (sweating) is effective but one must know what stage the fever is at. Cooling the skin when goosebumps and chills are present is not going to help decrease the temperature, but will only serve to raise the temperature further. Cooling the skin when sweating is occurring may cause an "overshoot" in the amount of cooling, and so the body temperature may fall too far below the temperature goal. When a client is neither sweating nor has chills/goosebumps but displays a high temperature, this is the best time to apply cool compresses and to have lukewarm baths.

Fatigue and Rest = The third stage of the fever.

Remember that a fever is very much a draining process on the body's reserves. The entire immune system has been taxed from the start of the illness to the end. It is recommended that three days rest including a program of rehydration, sleep, and good nutrition be a part of this third stage. Without such a time of rehabilitation or convalescence for the body, one is much more susceptible to getting another illness on the slightest exposure.

Reference: Lectures in Naturopathic Hydrotherapy. Boyle, W. and Saine. A.1988 Eclectic Medical Publications: Oregon pp.53-62

Food Allergy Testing

Common Allergy Related Conditions

When an allergic reaction occurs, the immune system reacts by releasing cells called antibodies. The foods and inhaled particles that provoke the release of antibodies are called 'allergens'. Two commonly produced antibodies are IgG (immunoglobulin G) and IgE (immunoglobulin E).

Conditions related to IgG allergies:

IgG allergic reactions occur over several hours or days. With an IgG allergic reaction, IgG antibodies attach themselves to the allergen and create an 'antibody-allergen complex'. These complexes are normally removed by special immune cells in the liver and spleen called macrophages, but if they are present in large numbers and the allergen continues to be consumed, the body isn't able to remove them fast enough. These allergen-antibody complexes build-up and are deposited in body tissues, causing the release of inflammation, and further releasing chemicals which contribute to a variety of health problems:

- **Headaches and high blood pressure** may result from deposition of antibody-allergen complexes in blood vessels.

- **Mood disorders:** Deposition of antibody-allergen complexes in nervous system tissues may contribute to hyperactivity, depression, anxiety, inability to concentrate and other mood disorders.

- **Asthma and recurring respiratory infections:** Deposition of antibody-allergen complexes in lung tissue can cause a variety of respiratory problems.

- **Eczema and other skin conditions** may result from deposition of antibody-allergen complexes in the skin.

- **Joint pain** may result from deposition of allergen-antibody complexes in joints.

- **Runny noses and puffiness around the eyes** can result from allergic reactions.

Conditions related to IgE allergies:

IgE reactions occur within minutes or hours of exposure and release inflammation causing chemicals such as histamine, which are responsible for most of the symptoms associated with IgE allergic reactions. These symptoms may include:

Redness and swelling are due to the rapid release of inflammation-causing histamine which cause the blood vessels to dilate, producing redness and swelling.

Tightening of airways: The rapid release of inflammation-causing histamine can cause airway congestion and constriction.

Itching: The rapid release of inflammation-causing chemicals can cause stimulation of nerve endings, which produce pain and itching on the skin surface.

Why Test for Food Allergies?

- Because IgG allergies are delayed hours or days after exposure and can be caused by multiple foods, they are virtually impossible to identify without testing. IgG allergy testing requires a simple finger prick with a lancet, either at home or in your practitioner's office. The blood is used to saturate three 3mm by 3mm test strips which are then left to dry. The laboratory tests these for IgG antibodies to a variety of different foods.
- IgE testing is useful for unexplained allergic reactions like hives, or for uncovering allergies to inhaled particles. IgE Allergy testing requires a needle puncture to withdraw blood, and the blood is centrifuged and the red cells removed, leaving clear serum. The serum comes to the laboratory for analysis.
- Lastly, there is a condition called 'leaky gut syndrome' that can promote the development of food allergies, and can itself be caused by food allergies. An over-load of antibody-allergen complexes causes inflammation in the lining of the gut, which causes the gut to 'leak'. This 'leaky gut' allows more antibody-

allergen complexes to escape into tissues, which provokes more allergic reactions to food. Thus anyone with leaky gut should be tested for food allergies and anyone with a lot of allergies may need to be treated for leaky gut. Therefore, your Registered Naturopathic Doctor may suggest treatments for your digestive system in addition to any recommended dietary changes.

What Do Allergy Test Results Mean?

IgG Delayed Hypersensitivity Reactions

IgG reactions develop slowly, up to several hours or days after exposure to a food allergen, so testing is often the only way of determining which foods are the culprits. The allergy test reports graphs your immune response to each of the foods tested. Reactions are categorized as *none, low, moderate* or *high.* We usually suggest eliminating the foods that you have allergies to for a period of time, depending on the severity of the allergy and the severity of your symptoms. This gives your body time to reverse the effects or symptoms caused by your food allergies.

Eliminating food allergens sometimes results in withdrawal symptoms like headaches, tiredness, irritability and hunger. Serious cravings for the eliminated foods are also common. Unfortunately, it is often the foods you are most allergic to that you crave the most! Knowing these cravings and symptoms are temporary, hopefully makes them easier to bear.

IgE Immediate Hypersensitivity Reactions

IgE reactions to food occur within minutes to hours after the food is consumed, and so are usually easy to diagnose. You eat a food and you experience symptoms like swelling and difficulty breathing right away – so you are motivated to avoid eating that food again! These kinds of allergic reactions usually remain for life. IgE reactions primarily affect the skin, lungs and digestive tract. The allergy test report categorizes reactions as *no, low, moderate* or *high*. Unlike IgG allergies, eliminating IgE food allergens does not generally cause withdrawal symptoms or cravings.

Allergies to inhaled allergens are difficult to identify without testing. These allergens include things like pollens, animal dander, dust mites and molds. Inhalant allergies are strictly IgE reactions.

Allergy tests offer a snapshot of the immune response to various foods. However, sometimes a *no reaction* result is recorded when an individual knows he/she is intolerant of a specific food. There are several reasons why this can occur. Foods that have not been consumed for two or three weeks prior to the test may not provoke an allergic response because there are no allergens to react to. In other words, if you don't eat it, you won't produce antibodies to it, so no reaction occurs. (The exception to this is if there is cross-reactivity to another food group).

Another possibility is that the reaction you experience is actually and intolerance, not an allergy. Food intolerances may mimic the symptoms of a food allergy but are not the direct result of an antibody-antigen reaction. For example, lactose intolerance is due

to a deficiency in the enzyme lactase, the enzyme responsible for eh digestion of the milk sugar lactose. Adverse reactions to food additives may also be defined as food intolerance. Sometimes a lack of digestive enzymes or stomach acid can result in a food intolerance. It is also possible, based on a previous negative episode with a specific food (e.g. food poisoning) to have a physical reaction to that food, because of the negative experience associated with it.

Test Options

General Foods

- Tests 96 common foods from a variety of food groups including: meat, fish, dairy, grains, vegetables and fruits.

Vegetarian

- There is a separate panel for vegetarians that examines a wider range of fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes.

Herbs & Spices

- This panel looks at 24 common herbs including Echinacea and milk thistle along with 24 common spices (e.g. cinnamon and vanilla).

Inhalants

- This panel looks at 48 common inhaled allergies from a variety of categories including: grasses, molds, trees, weeds and airborne indoor particles.

IgG allergy samples require a simple bloodspot and are collected at the Armstrong Clinic. Patients will be sent to the closest MDS/Rocky Mountain Analytical Laboratories Testing Facility for IgE allery sample collection. Results are obtained 2-4 weeks after sample collection.

What Other Allergy Testing is Available and Commonly Used?

Elimination/Rotation Diet

This involves the removal of a suspected allergen for a length of time (suggested 4 week period) and following this a re-introduction of the food. The patient's symptoms are noted during food removal and upon reintroduction to see if a subjective change is experienced with offending symptoms. The difficulty in this type of testing is determining the allergens. This can be a difficult process and does not always allow accurate determination of allergens. If a patient has an allergy to a number of different foods and they are not all identified and removed simultaneously, then the patient may not experience much of a symptomatic change.

Skin-Prick Allergy Testing

The most common allergy testing that is performed is called IgE skin prick or scratch allergy testing. This can give an indication of which IgE mediated allergies may be present, but is not as specific or accurate as a blood draw to test specific IgE blood serum concentrations for IgE proteins. The *prick-puncture test* involves a small amount of allergen being injected into the epidermis. Life-threatening anaphylactic reactions have not been noted with the *prick-puncture test.* The second method of skin allergy testing is

called the *intradermal test*. Here a larger amount of the allergen is injected into the dermis (creating a skin wheal). Large local reactions and anaphylaxis have been reported with this latter method – thus making serum IgE testing a safer option. A positive reaction creates a wheal with a diameter greater than 3mm, or a flare with a diameter greater than a 10mm.

Interfering Factors

- False-positive results in patients with dermographism. Patients with dermographism (non-allergic response of redness and swelling of the skin at the site of any stimulation) develop a skin wheal with any skin irritation, even if non-allergic.
- False-positive results if the patient has a reaction to the preservative used in the testing fluids
- Infants and the elderly may have decreased skin reactivity.
- Immunosuppressed patients may not elicit the wheal or flare to allergens, thus giving false-negatives.
- Skin-prick allergy testing is extremely accurate for inhalant allergies, however they are **less reliable for IgE food allergies (and DO NOT test IgG allergies)**, latex allergies, drug sensitivity and occupational allergies.

RAST Test

Another commonly used method to test IgE is called the radioallergosorbent test (RAST). In this method, a patient's serum is mixed with a specific allergen. The antibody-allergen complex is then incubated with one or more radiolabeled monoclonal anti-IgE antibodies. The total amount of IgE can then be measured. Accuracy varies between 45% and 95% depending on the allergen.

Other 'Alternative' allergy tests

'Electrodermal skin allergy testing' or 'VEGA', and 'Applied Kinesiology' or 'Muscle Testing' are some other alternative testing methods. Neither of these testing methods are recognized by the BDDT-N (the governing body for Registered Naturopathic Doctors) as accurate testing methods. There is a wide range of subjectivity in these methods and thus should not be used to confirm a diagnosis. The Registered Naturopathic Doctors at the Armstrong Clinic do **NOT** use these tests, nor do they believe they are accurate diagnostic tools.

References

Much of the information found above about IgG and IgE testing has been adapted from information presented by Rocky Mountain Analytical Laboratories and has been reproduced with their permission. Rocky Mountain Analytical Laboratories also provide a wide range of salivary hormonal testing in addition to Food Allergy testing.

Moseby, Inc. Moseby's Manual of Diagnostic and Laboratory Tests. 2nd ED.

Questions about the content of this newsletter may be directed to Sean Armstrong or Heidi Kussmann-Armstrong. The material is intended for educational purposes and does not constitute diagnosis or treatment. You are encouraged to speak to your Registered Naturopathic Doctor about a diagnosis and treatment specified to your individual signs and symptoms.

Clinic News and Events:

We are accepting new patients at our Tillsonburg and Simcoe clinics. The Armstrong Clinic is **open Wednesdays and Fridays in Tillsonburg**. The office hours: 9:30am-6pm. The Armstrong Clinic is open full time in Simcoe with office hours as follows: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 9am-5pm, Thursdays 1-6pm.

Congratulations to Dr. Heidi Kussmann-Armstrong BSc, ND for being awarded the ND of the Year (2006)! This is a provincial award from the Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors, which was determined by voting from the Registered Naturopathic Doctors in Ontario. Currently there are approximately 700 Registered Naturopathic Doctors in Ontario.

New Full-Time Office Manager! The Armstrongs are pleased to welcome Kelly Miller to our team at the clinic. Kelly is the voice of The Armstrong Clinic on the phone and will be in charge of your supplement orders and refills, appointment bookings, and general inquiries.

Please clip out this schedule and post it so that you don't miss these important dates.

Date (2007)	Time	Location	Topic	Registration Info
Wednesday February 28th	7:30pm	The Armstrong Clinic - Simcoe	Allergy Identification, Prevention and Treatment.	519.426.4275 Cost is $5 per person.
Wednesday April 4th	7:30pm	The Armstrong Clinic - Simcoe	Breast Health Seminar	519.426.4275 Cost is $5 per person.
Saturday April 28th	10am-5pm	The Armstrong Clinic - Simcoe	Breast Thermography Clinic	519.426.4275 Cost: $250 (GST included).
Thursday May 10th	10am-12noon	Woodingford Lodge, Tillsonburg	Multiple Sclerosis	519.688.3613