

Alpha-gal Allergy

Alpha-gal is a sugar (galactose-alpha-1,3-galactose) found in most mammals with the exception of humans, apes, and monkeys. Alpha-gal can be found in many products made from these mammals including some medications, cosmetics, vaccines, gelatin, and milk products.

Alpha-gal is transmitted to lone star ticks after biting animals including cows and sheep. Lone star ticks will then carry the alpha-gal and inject the molecules into the human body. This may trigger the appearance of a condition known as alpha-gal syndrome. This results from an unusual immune response to the alpha-gal sugar.

Affected people would have mild to severe allergic reactions upon eating red meat (beef, lamb, pork, venison, and rabbits). Allergic reactions also occur upon exposure to products from mammals such as cosmetics, medications, vaccines, gelatin, and milk. Cetuximab, a cancer drug that contains alpha-gal, is one of those medications. More serious reactions can develop in people suffering from repeated tick bites.

Symptoms do not necessarily develop after each exposure and naturally symptoms vary from one individual to the other. Alpha-gal allergies appear to affect individuals of all ages. It is mostly common in south eastern and mid-western United States though many cases have been identified in other parts of the country where the lone Star tick is not typically seen.

Symptoms

Symptoms include hives, itching, eczema, dizziness, fainting, breathing difficulties, and drop in blood pressure. Other symptoms include; swelling of the lips, face, tongue and throat, or other body parts. A runny nose, sneezing, and headaches are also common. Gastro-intestinal symptoms such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting are not uncommon.

While the majority food allergies are seen almost immediately following food ingestion, alpha-gal allergy can be delayed up to eight hours following the consumption of red meat. This is due to the fact that alpha-gal molecules take a longer time to be digested and absorbed compared to other allergens.

In extreme cases, patients may develop alpha-gal anaphylactic shock. This is a serious medical emergency that require immediate medical attention and treatment with epinephrine (adrenaline) injector such as EpiPen. Signs of anaphylaxis concludes; drop

in blood pressure, swelling of the mouth and the throat, airway constriction, dizziness, and loss of consciousness.

Course of the disease

Unless the individual is repeatedly bitten by ticks, it is believed that alpha-gal allergy may dissipate in about 3 to 5 years.

Tests

Similar to other allergies, skin tests through pricking the skin with a small amount of alpha-gal can identify reactions to the sugar in allergic patients. Identifying alpha-gal antibodies in the bloodstream is an additional method.

Medical Treatment

Prevention

Avoid wooded bushy areas with long grass where ticks are usually found. Appropriate clothes should be worn in such areas. Use of appropriate insect repellent. Clearing brush and leaves would deprive the ticks from their favorable habitat. After trips to wooded grassy areas, showering may help remove unattached ticks. Ticks usually stay unattached to the skin for hours.

Patients diagnosed with Alpha-gal will have to avoid eating red meat, dairy, and other products that contain alpha-gal. Treatment of allergic reactions is mainly symptomatic in nature. Anti-histamines and steroids may be used for mild to moderate allergic reactions. Anaphylactic shock requires epinephrine injections and other medical measures.

Our treatment

Acupuncture techniques are known to offer much needed relief from allergies. Body acupuncture approaches such as NAET and some ear acupuncture methods are known to give some relief for short periods of time. These techniques require multiple treatments and multiple visits.

Recently, Dr. Soliman introduced a new ear acupuncture technique known as the [SAAT \(Soliman Auricular Allergy Treatment\)](#). The patented SAAT technique proved to be the most sophisticated acupuncture technique used to address allergy symptoms.

The technique is simple in its approach, requiring **one** treatment for any particular allergen (substance you are allergic to) and needs only **one** small needle to provide

allergy symptoms relief. Symptoms relief is seen within a short period following the treatment. Unlike all other acupuncture methods addressing allergies, the SAAT provides long-term relief from allergy symptoms. Alpha-gal allergy is no exception, patients suffering from such allergy can experience symptoms relief shortly after one treatment.

Reference: Soliman, N. A Comparison Study of the Effectiveness of SAAT (Soliman's Auricular Allergy Treatment) Approach and Nogier's Allergy Treatment Technique. Medical Acupuncture, Vol.26, No 3.