

ASK THE COACH

Answers to the most common wellness questions that we get from students and from busy parents like you!



PARENTS: DEAR COACH, CAN FOOD ALLERGIES DEVELOP AS TIME GOES BY?

If you'd have come into the Coaches' office many years ago, you'd have noticed that all of the ceiling vents were taped closed because I deduced that dust in the ventilation system had to be the cause of those old uncontrollable mid-morning sneezing attacks. It wasn't until my second week in nutrition school that I started to wonder if my daily morning yogurt was another likely suspect and by week three, it was confirmed...Coach was allergic to dairy all along! Life changer.

Over the years since then, we've helped many clients to connect the dots between their expanding symptoms and food allergies (our system typically takes 10 days). Folks who previously assumed seasonal allergies are now thriving without dairy and folks once diagnosed with IBS are enjoying the gluten-free lifestyle.

I speak often about reengineering environments for success and what I like to call "The Domino Effect". As an example, we see folks who have recurring issues with pneumonia or sinus infections and wonder if they can take more control in preventing it. For me, dairy causes more than just some annoying congestion. It creates a mucous buildup, a breeding ground that is more susceptible to other germs. If I then catch a cold, I can't sleep well and my immune system is further impaired. If I'm thrown off my normal schedule, I'm unable to eat and exercise, which makes me feel bad mentally and physically. Two weeks of misery, all catalyzed by the cream in that restaurant soup...the domino effect!

Food allergies are very common in adults and they absolutely can

develop over time. Let me know if you need help troubleshooting.

KID'S: HEY COACH, SHOULD I ONLY EAT ORGANIC FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?

First, let's clarify that organic foods are produced with limited use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Those things typically aren't great for you and they can damage the earth and environment.

Coach believes that food companies will always find a way to supply what people demand and that we vote for what we want with our forks (what we choose to eat)! It's important to note that it tends to cost more because there is a higher cost to produce it but organic food is the fastest growing sector of the American food industry.

So there are a lot of factors to consider and ultimately, you should discuss it with your family. Those who want to find an affordable medium choose to go organic with foods where we eat the flesh ("Dirty Dozen" foods like grapes, apples, peaches, peppers, greens, berries, etc.) and non-organic with foods that have protective outer layers ("Clean 15" foods like avocados, onions, melons, pineapples, eggplant, citrus fruits, etc.). Families who aren't able to afford organic foods can rest easy because tests shows that 99% of the time, pesticide residues are below the permissible, conservative limits set by regulators.

So organic is great but once again, choose any farm foods over factory foods when you have an option!

'Coach' Ryan Lonnett is a Certified Health Counselor and a Commissioner / Coach in Reston Little League. Leveraging his culinary, nutrition and fitness training, Ryan founded a health practice called Empowered Wellness, whose coaches deliver both custom and group wellness programs, including after school classes in Elementary Schools. Ryan sits on several community boards and steering committees, frequently delivers presentations in school, community or corporate assemblies, and occasionally can be seen or heard in the media sharing best practices from his years of experience in this unique arena.

For more information: www.empowered-wellness.com