



Difficulties in Non-IgE Mediated Gastrointestinal Food Allergy Treatments with Gastroenterologists

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DESCRIPTION

Gastrointestinal food allergies are a complex group of disorders that can significantly impact an individual's digestive health. While IgE-mediated food allergies are well-recognized and widely studied, non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies present unique challenges for patients and healthcare providers. Here explores the role of gastroenterologists in the diagnosis, management, and treatment of non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies.

Non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies are a distinct category of food allergies that do not involve the typical IgE-mediated immune response. In IgE-mediated allergies, exposure to a specific food allergen triggers an immediate and potentially life-threatening reaction. However, non-IgE mediated allergies, also known as delayed-type hypersensitivity reactions, involve a different set of immune mechanisms.

These allergies can manifest with a wide range of gastrointestinal symptoms, such as chronic diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting, and poor weight gain. While IgE-mediated allergies are characterized by an immediate onset of symptoms, non-IgE mediated allergies often result in delayed and chronic digestive problems, making them harder to diagnose.

The role of gastroenterologists

Gastroenterologists play a major role in the diagnosis and management of non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies. These specialized physicians are experts in the digestive system and are well-equipped to address the complex nature of these conditions. Their responsibilities in the care of patients with non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies include the following:

Diagnosis: Gastroenterologists are skilled in identifying and diagnosing non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies. They assess a patient's medical history, symptoms, and conduct various diagnostic tests, such as endoscopy, biopsy, and allergy testing.

Treatment planning: Once a diagnosis is established, gastroenterologists work to develop a comprehensive treatment plan to the patient's specific needs. This often involves dietary modifications, including the elimination of specific allergenic foods.

Dietary guidance: Gastroenterologists provide patients with guidance on managing their diets, helping them avoid trigger foods and identifying suitable alternatives to maintain adequate nutrition.

Monitoring and follow-up: Regular follow-up appointments are essential to monitor the progress of treatment and make necessary adjustments. Gastroenterologists may recommend repeat endoscopies or other tests to assess the healing of the gastrointestinal tract.

Collaboration with allergists: In some cases, gastroenterologists work closely with allergists to address both gastrointestinal and systemic manifestations of food allergies. This interdisciplinary approach ensures comprehensive care for patients with complex allergies.

Types of Non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies

Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE): EoE is characterized by an accumulation of eosinophils (a type of white blood cell) in the esophagus. It leads to symptoms such as difficulty swallowing, food impaction, and heartburn. Gastroenterologists are often involved in the diagnosis and management of EoE, which may require dietary interventions, medications, and endoscopic evaluations.

Food Protein-Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome (FPIES): FPIES is a non-IgE mediated food allergy that primarily affects the intestines. Symptoms may include severe vomiting, diarrhea, and, in some cases, dehydration. Gastroenterologists are responsible for assessing the extent of intestinal inflammation and helping patients manage their diets.

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Allergic proctocolitis: Allergic proctocolitis mainly affects infants and is characterized by inflammation of the lower gastrointestinal tract. This condition is often a response to cow's milk or other dietary allergens. Gastroenterologists may diagnose and recommend dietary modifications or hypoallergenic formulas.

Food-induced enteropathy: This condition, also known as food protein-induced enteropathy, involves inflammation of the small intestine. Gastroenterologists help identify the specific trigger foods and develop treatment plans to manage the inflammation and alleviate symptoms.

Treatment and management

The treatment and management of non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies typically involve a combination of dietary modifications and, in some cases, medication. Gastroenterologists work closely with patients and their families to develop individualized treatment plans, which may include the following:

Elimination diets: The cornerstone of treatment often involves eliminating the specific food allergen(s) that trigger the gastrointestinal symptoms. A trial-and-error process may be necessary to identify the offending foods.

Elemental formula: In severe cases or when multiple food triggers are identified, gastroenterologists may recommend specialized elemental formulas that are hypoallergenic and easier to digest.

Medications: Depending on the specific diagnosis and symptoms, gastroenterologists may prescribe medications to manage inflammation, relieve symptoms, or address related conditions.

CONCLUSION

Gastroenterologists play a major role in the diagnosis and management of non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies. These complex conditions often result in chronic and delayed symptoms, making them difficult to identify and treat. With their expertise in the digestive system, gastroenterologists collaborate with other healthcare professionals to develop the treatment plans that address the specific needs of each patient. Ongoing research and interdisciplinary efforts are key to advancing our understanding and improving the care of individuals affected by non-IgE mediated gastrointestinal food allergies, ultimately enhancing their quality of life and digestive health.