



ETERNAL HEALTH

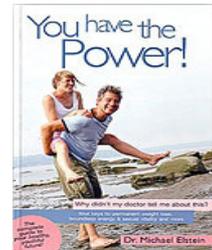
with
Dr. Michael Elstein

Beating Chronic Cough - It's Not That Easy

When you have a medical problem that won't go away, who you gonna call? Which is why a colleague and friend, who has a dental practice in Paris and an annoying cough has seen three different physicians in the past two months, taken four sets of antibiotics, cortisone medication, two different asthma puffers and antacid medication for reflux, with barely a reprieve for her persistent cough. You'd think that the medical solution for an irritating cough would be simple - find the irritant and terminate it.

Being the dependable friend that I am and with her livelihood threatened by bouts of uncontrollable coughing while she was at work, I decided that I'd better look at the current state of the science. Bottom line is, right now, we don't know what causes chronic cough. We used to think it was connected with one of three possible underlying diseases; asthma, post-nasal drip and reflux or regurgitation from the oesophagus, the pipe that carries our food to the stomach. In 2011 the evidence to support each of these three potential causes is hardly substantial, with the smart money leaning towards post-nasal drip, which itself is currently undergoing a makeover with respect to what it encompasses.

Anyway, while she marinated her cough centre in a host of medications that were covering all bets, without providing a winner, I took a look at her less medicinal options. Post-nasal drip is usually connected with allergies or bugs. Studies show that chronic cough can be associated with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance, as well as vitamin B12 deficiency. I also found a link between fungal infestation and post-nasal drip. I conveyed all this information to her, suggesting she get her allergies tested, including those for gluten and yeast, together with having her vitamin B12 measured. What could be more difficult than avoiding yeast and gluten, throwing in dairy and taking extra vitamin B12, if you need it? Here's what I'm struggling with. She's declined and is now on another antibiotic and a more powerful acid-suppressing medication.



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July 2011 Newsletter

The rise and rise of food allergies

Australia and the Western World is in the midst of a food allergy avalanche. In this country one in 10 Australian infants has a food allergy - a somewhat staggering statistic. Experts here concede that the incidence of food allergy has escalated dramatically in recent times. What they can't identify is why.

Journal Club

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These articles will also include commentary from Dr Elstein.

What's fascinating to me is the recent drive to ensure that children are vaccinated citing the benefits in preventing life-threatening diseases. Yet research conducted at the University of Melbourne by the Centre for Molecular, Environmental, Genetic and Analytical Epidemiology, has acknowledged that diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio immunisations were associated with approximately 50% higher risk of eczema and food allergies in 7-year-olds.

The same can be said of vitamin D. Claims have been made by experts around the world that most of us are vitamin D deficient and that we need substantial supplementation. A recent study on infants has shown that infants given vitamin D supplementation were at increased risk of food allergy.

Research conducted by the Centre for Immune Regulation at the University of Oslo, suggests that the increasing incidence of obesity and the growth of the genetically modified food industry might be implicated. The liberal use by physicians of powerful medications to lower acid production in the stomach and a lack of beneficial and protective bacteria in the GUT

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are also thought to play a part in the development of allergies, according to the Oslo scientists. A study on mice has shown that excess yeast or candidiasis in the bowel was able to promote the development of food allergies.

The experts from Oslo suggest that exclusive breastfeeding for 4 months will help to prevent food allergy and that infants would benefit from optimising their vitamin A and omega-3 fatty acid status.

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