

The Energetics of Allergies

By Heidi Hawkins, MAc, LAc

Allergies are inherently energetic in nature. In Western medicine, they are only measurable when there is a specific detectable immune response; however, most people have had the experience of reacting negatively to something, whether or not they have been diagnosed as "allergic." What is a negative reaction? A disruption of *qi* on any level - the creation of phlegm instead of *qi* by the spleen; an overreactive *wei qi* response; stagnation of the liver - these are just a few of the more common *qi* imbalances caused by allergies.

Redefining Allergy

An energetic definition of allergy is very broad: all "sensitivities" and "intolerances" are included. Energetic definition of allergy does not require immune response to an allergen, only a reaction of some kind: something that disrupts the balance of the person's *qi* in any way. An allergy calls attention through a reaction to anything a person is not in right relationship with. This could be virtually anything: items found in nature, man-made chemicals, even another person. All allergies are treatable.

The Challenge of Treatment

For a practitioner of Oriental medicine to address allergies directly, she or he must practice an integrated hybrid of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) with Western knowledge. This is not to say we must practice Western medicine or offer a Western diagnosis. On the contrary: we must be more specific and precise. Is it the spleen that is deficient, or is it more accurate to say it is actually the thyroid, which is ruled by the spleen? Yes, it **does** matter. A more specific treatment is more accurate and therefore more effective. With allergies, accuracy is very important. Western terminology is also easier for Western clients to understand.

The energetic nature of allergies is what makes them especially responsive to energetic medicine. Allergies have traditionally been a very difficult and stubborn disorder to treat. The failure of most treatment strategies is overtreating. Allergies or "sensitivities" are about sensitivity. Aggressive treatment of sensitive people or sensitive conditions is hardly the best approach. Treatment of allergies is a challenge to a practitioner to trust in and experiment with the subtlety of TCM. This subtlety is part of the beauty of TCM; it leads back to the Taoist roots of the medicine and the importance of compassion.

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