

Little Louis and his Allergy Journey

Information for other parents with children suffering from Eczema and or Allergies

By Kimberley Chin Poy, Sydney, Australia

Our son Louis was born with the silky smooth creamy skin of a newborn. However, a week or two into his young life his skin began to show lots of red patches here and there, which we discovered to be eczema – a condition that affects my husband's side of the family.

Initially we approached a GP. The treatment prescribed was to use good moisturisers, sensitive bath products, and topical steroid cream externally on the red patches. I was also encouraged to use a sensitive washing powder. After all these components were introduced and implemented, we still didn't see any noticeable difference and Louis' skin fluctuated, seemingly without rhyme or traceable reason. Sometimes flare ups were worse than others.

While Louis suckled well, was putting on weight and was generally a good baby, we could not work out what was happening to cause the red, dry patches and sometimes welt like breakouts. Within hours of putting him to bed sometimes big red angry welts would appear under his pyjamas and he would be inconsolable. My worst experience of this was putting him in a pyjama suit loaned by a friend and being rudely awoken about two hours after going to bed myself with his high pitched screaming. I ran in to find him in pain and in the dim light of midnight, ran my hand up the back of his pyjamas to feel raised welty lumps on his back which were stinging from the urine of a leaky nappy.

Was it the suit? Was it the washing powder? Was it something I ate and breastfed to him? Or was it something I washed him in that night? I agonised over these questions, but still couldn't come up with a plausible answer no matter how many times I checked and rechecked the products I put on him or thought about the foods I had consumed. No matter what changes I made to the external components we could control, he often still scratched himself to bloody bits and pieces. It had to be internal, I thought. But my GP dismissed this and told me to continue to eat a well balanced diet while breastfeeding. I never thought toast and tea could possibly cause these problems.

A flow on effect of his extremely sensitive skin was that Louis didn't sleep very well. While he did sleep through the night sometimes, and could self settle, it was never consistent. Some nights were worse than others. There didn't seem to be any sort of pattern I could track.

I breastfed for six months before switching to a lactose free formula after trials with Goat's milk formula and Soy formula showed signs of intolerance (painful constipation and pink reaction around the mouth). We suffered through thinking we could work it out ourselves. However at wits end after receiving piles of mystifying miscommunication, we decided at Louis' 2nd birthday that there had to be more going on than bad sleep patterns and skin sensitivities supposedly fixed by steroid creams.

After speaking to a GP when we moved to a new suburb and combined our GP records, we went down the route of exploring problems with adenoids and grommets. Even after an operation to remove his adenoids and insert grommets, Louis sleeping patterns still didn't improve. He still woke with itchy skin and tummy cramping. I had been holding on to that operation as my saviour. But in reality, whilst maybe he was getting more air in to find a deeper layer of sleep, and we had limited

the occurrence of ear infections, we had to face up to the fact this operation wasn't fixing other internal problems we couldn't see, nor was it the solution for his ongoing itchy skin.

After experiencing and confirming an acute allergic reaction to Kiwifruit with a visit to the children's hospital and discussing our suspicions with medical staff there about soy and peanuts, we went on the public hospital waiting list for Louis to see an allergy specialist. That was 18 months ago. We have still not been called with an appointment time. In the interim, after many facebook expressions of helplessness, a friend gave us the phone number and name of a naturopath they'd had success with. Without any public hospital allergy appointment in sight, we made the call. On our first visit, the naturopath, Sally-Anne Bertram, hardly batted an eyelid and said she said she had seen many cases like Louis. It was fortuitous to get treatment while young, she said, and there was a high chance of great improvement if not cure.

While it is still not clear why more and more children are being born with allergies, the naturopath did understand what was happening to their bodies (internally and externally) and some, if not all of the food allergies and skin reactions, could be fixed, she said.

From this initial consultation I learnt three things about Louis.

- 1) His immune system was in a compromised state and not fighting for him. This was due to his T helper cells being askew or not in balance. This is common in allergy states and is called TH2 dominance. This imbalance of the immune system is often hereditary and results in patients constantly getting colds infections and having food sensitivities. It is like the immune gate is open allowing viruses, fungus and bacteria's to set up house in the body. This constant state of infection leads to allopathic treatment with antibiotics. This constant use of antibiotics momentarily kills bacteria but weakens the immune system of the gut.
- 2) If the immune system of the gut is compromised by these viruses, funguses and bacteria, it can lead to problems with intestinal barrier function or gut permeability. This is also called "leaky gut". This leaky gut in simple terms can lead to food particles entering the blood stream and thus creating inflammatory responses from the ever vigilant immune system. This inflammatory response can be behind asthma, eczema, hayfever, ibs, and chronic fatigue syndrome.
- 3) Louis' treatment was to last 6-12 weeks. It included a cytotoxic food test to identify his sensitivities, and an herbal medicine treatment would be given to his gut (to heal and seal), followed by re-establishing Louis' "immune and good gut" flora with pro-biotics. If the test identified any fungus this would be killed with the herbs.

Basically, as I understood it from this first consultation with Sally-Anne (naturopath) and reading pamphlets she provided is "that when these affected children are born with T2 dominance, which keeps the immune system's door open, so to speak, these children experience a lot of illness and infections in the first two years of their life". Sounds a lot like Louis I immediately thought. At one point I had even wondered if he had an immune system at all, and that was my next port of call if this didn't work.

At the height of our dilemma with Louis', he had had five prescriptions for antibiotics in one month when he was not quite two years old. At this time I was waking up to him three to four times a night. And while most babies are born with their immune system in TH2 dominance, children with T2 dominant family history often continue to stay in this phase whereas children without this hereditary

immune kink, go forward into a naturally balanced immune state. Constant use of antibiotics lowers Th3 of the gut immune system.

After our first consultation we were sent for the blood test. Blood was extracted and Louis' IGG immune response to 130 foods was recorded. This determined which foods were affecting Louis specifically. Amongst 17 things found to be reactionary for Louis, dairy was overwhelmingly the biggest allergen. So we had to use a dairy free pro-biotic. The other top allergens were soy, wheat, gluten, yeast, egg, nuts, seeds, sunflower, avocado, coconut amongst a host of other things. We immediately went on an eight week exclusion diet of all reactionary foods, while using rice milk, dairy free pro-biotic, and the immune system heal and seal herbal concoction day and night. It was a lot to comprehend and take in. I ordered a cookbook from the celiac society and began ordering gluten free foods online. We noticed an improvement in his sleep patterns and his skin within the first two weeks.

The biggest change came in the form of Louis' ability to handle illness which improved out of sight. Louis hardly had any colds or viruses or seemed to be fighting them better and recovering faster. His skin was soft and supple and after the first month I didn't need to use the steroid cream half as much. Red elbows, neck creases and knees were healing, then gone. Sleep consistency was the hardest part for us to crack however. We'd see improvements and then set-backs and began monitoring this against his diet for answers.

After 10 weeks on a pretty restricted diet we were sent by Sally-Anne to see a Kinesiologist to start desensitising the immune response to the offending foods.

Kinesiologists do a different kind of testing using muscle response to allergen triggers in vials. During this test they picked up a few more things Louis was allergic to – such as corn, potato, moulds, dusts, salicylates, sugars, preservatives, monosodium glutamates, etc and he had a histamine imbalance. So after the initial kinesiology testing we began to work through each allergen one by one and treat it, which involved further excluding each particular food group from Louis' diet (if it was diet related) for 24 hours before reintroducing it. Sleep initially improved and we had several sleep throughs in a row.

Louis' skin improved yet again and frequency and severity of allergic reactions had decreased yet again. 2/3 improvements is astounding. Sleep consistency was the final piece of the puzzle eluding us, however I have to admit improvements and some of his current wake ups are due to identifiable reasons (like wet beds as we go nappy free, and being cold as he wriggles out from under his blankets) so we are definitely on the upside.

Presently we are still undergoing therapy with the Kinesiologist and I am committed to seeing the process through until we have treated each and every allergen on the list. Egg has recently been reintroduced. Cooked in a product (i.e. a cake) it seems to be tolerated really well. However, in its raw form (beat into cake mix but as yet uncooked) egg still generated a reaction requiring phenegan, so we repeated the egg desensitisation treatment specifically for egg yolk. This was quickly followed by treatments for glutamates and that week we had a breakthrough in sleep – 6/8 nights delivering a full night's sleep (a miracle for mum and Louis) – but I'm not counting my chickens just yet.

We have 8 more treatments to go. Sugars also had to be done a second time as they reappeared as a trigger - but we were told this would happen and I wasn't surprised as Louis' ended up on a high sugar diet as so many other prepared and packaged snack foods were excluded due to egg, wheat, soy, gluten or a cross mix of these.

What I can impart however, is that if you have a child suffering like Louis with food allergies and eczema and have only been recommended steroid creams and other external solutions by your GP, may I suggest you try?

- 1) Visit / Try a naturopath – see if they know of or understand T2 dominance and have an allergy program that they initiate.
- 2) Get a cytotoxic food blood test, which is important to specifically identify those foods / external triggers to exclude in food exclusion diet. Patches from the chemist can be purchased prior to blood being taken which acts as a local anaesthetic to the area so the child doesn't feel pain from the needle.
- 3) Be prepared to undergo eight weeks of an extensive exclusion diet. Some days all Louis could eat was meat, rice, vegetables, fruit and plain rice crackers and potato chips. Making all your own food from scratch is the ultimate (knowing every single ingredient). Be prepared for the full exclusion of dairy (use an alternative butter, no yoghurt, no cheese, no milk, no sour cream, ice cream), read labels on food stuffs, limit all processed snack foods, and take your own snacks to children's birthday parties (I found this on the odd occasion heart wrenching. Watching kids eat cake that Louis couldn't eat at day-care or parties and seeing his eyes well up at being excluded, unable to understand why, broke my heart). But we found gluten free lollies, naturally flavoured icy poles, Uncle Toby's Fruit Fix (like lollies but sold in the muesli bar aisle) and Scooby Doo fruit gel snacks, which became our substitute treat foods – hence the high sugar but low gluten, wheat, no dairy, no egg etc diet. Hash browns, French fries and apple juice became our McDonald's options and only the corn cakes and rice crackers without flavouring were our friends. I am still scared and extremely suspicious of any coatings on crackers, chips and snacks and will probably stick to the plain flavoured popcorns, chips and crackers as a result.
- 4) After the initial treatment of healing and balancing the immune system, seek out a Kinesiologist and ask them about their treatment plans and testing for allergies and eczema. All of the treatment processes help the other.
- 5) Be prepared to trust in the process until the end. I won't be able to give my final verdict until the final 8 Kinesiology treatments are done but I can definitely see an improvement in his skin, illness recovery and on and off, sleep patterns. The biggest most obvious improvement to date is that I hardly ever need a steroid cream anymore whereas I used to use it three times a day, nor do we moisturise him on a nightly basis. Louis also now runs without scratching himself constantly (he used to run like an orang-utan, swinging his nails across his chest and nipples as they were always itchy, giving them a quick scratch as he went). He also doesn't wake in the night screaming for no reason, or to be found itching ferociously and writhing around the bed and hard to resettle. These two things in themselves are major milestones for us. With the recent improvement in sleep since the second desensitisation for egg and glutamates, I can only hope this final piece of the puzzle falls into place.

One of the most amazing things that has happened is that I now have hope that Louis can and will eat everything without fear of an allergic reaction in the future. David, a practitioner at Health & Wellness Australia (the Kinesiologist) suffered chronic allergies as a child and was told at the age of 20 he couldn't eat certain foods and this would never get better, as did Sally-Anne who is an asthmatic. Through their own study and receipt of treatment, they are living proof you can change

these allergies and they are not a life-long sentence. Now both practitioners we have been seeing for Louis eat whatever they want. I can only hope the same one day will apply to my son.

It should be noted that Louis is quite a severe case. Not all children or adults that undertake this program have this same experience, so therefore it might be less arduous than what we have been through. (It is noted that the peanut allergy may not be able to be treated and as such we are leaving this till the last session).

The combined program of naturopathy and kinesiology designed by Sally-Anne Bertram is intended for the treatment of asthma, ibs, sinus, eczema, coeliac, cfs, candida that may result in: wind bloating, weight gain, cramps, itching, rashes, and constant colds.

If you live in or can get to Sydney, below are the contact details for the people we used.

Naturopath:

Sally-Anne Bertram (Works out of The Naturecare College Clinic in St Leonards) and The Pain Clinic in Central Tilba, NSW.

Ph: 0414 482 072 or 8423 8444

Email: sallyannebertram@hotmail.com

Cost: Sally-Anne Bertram, Fridays 3-7 Standard consultation \$130 N/P follow up 40 mins \$70.

Desensitisation through Kinesiology:

Health & Wellness Australia (Kinesiology): Victoria Rich

Email: victorialrich@hotmail.com

Ph: 1300 853 023 – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Auckland clinics

<http://www.hwaaustralia.com.au/services/kinesiology/>

Cost: \$130 for first full check and consultation and \$90 per treatment thereafter.