



Allergic to Food?

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Pediatric *Annals* this month discusses the topic of food allergies in children. The young child with milk or egg allergy is a familiar story in pediatric offices as is the older child with peanut, tree nut, fish, or shellfish allergy. Dr. Jacqueline Pongracic has organized a very interesting set of reviews of this topic from various perspectives that provide considerable useful information.

Once before in this column, I have noted my acquaintance with oral allergy syndrome (or pollen-food allergy syndrome), which comes in two varieties. In one, some individuals with birch sensitivity experience pruritus, tingling, and swelling of the lips, palate, and tongue after eating raw (but not cooked) carrots, celery, or apples. In the other, experienced by yours truly, some with ragweed pollen allergy develop these oral symptoms after eating raw watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, and banana. This syndrome obviously reflects the presence of shared allergenic epitopes between the pollens and fruits and vegetables. I can

report that this not-serious disorder is particularly annoying and uncomfortable. This condition is acquired not in infancy but rather in childhood and can be life-long.

Food allergy stamps do not exist, and I have chosen five other stamps for this column. The stamp from Croatia shows a hand clutching an overgrown virus particle, with the symbol for AIDS and the English slogan “Stop AIDS.” The two 2007 stamps from Paraguay celebrate “Día Mundial Libre del Tabaco” (“World Day Free of Tobacco”). In contrast, the two blue-green 1990 stamps from Turkey send more heavy-handed anti-smoking and anti-drug abuse messages.



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