

Todd County Extension

Family & Consumer Sciences

Newsletter

Todd County Extension
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April, 2024

Understanding Alpha-Gal Syndrome, The Red Meat Allergy

Alpha-gal syndrome, known as the “red meat allergy,” was discovered in 2009 as a reaction in humans to lone star tick bites. Alpha-gal is short for the name of a sugar molecule found in all mammals except for humans. This molecule is not found in birds or fish. After the tick bite, some people develop an immune response to this specific sugar which causes the development of the syndrome. Not everyone bitten by a lone star tick will develop alpha-gal. It is unknown why some people develop the condition and others do not.

Like other food allergies, alpha-gal syndrome can cause symptoms such as skin irritations, hives, gut issues, and breathing problems. The severity of the condition is different for everyone. Unlike the typical food allergy, a person with alpha-gal syndrome may have a delayed allergic reaction anywhere between three and six hours after ingesting meat or other products that come from mammals. This may make it difficult to diagnose. It is a rare condition but is becoming much more common across Kentucky. Medical professionals diagnose alpha-gal syndrome with a blood test. There is no cure, but people living with the

condition can eliminate foods that contain alpha-gal to avoid allergic reactions and manage symptoms.

People who have alpha-gal must remove beef, pork, and lamb from their diets to avoid allergic reactions. Certain cuts and types of meat have higher amounts of alpha-gal and cause worse reactions. For example, organ meats such as liver, heart, and tripe have higher amounts of alpha-gal. Other foods often made with ingredients from mammals that may cause reactions include broths, bouillon, stocks, gravy, and other items made with lard or tallow. For those who hunt, be mindful that wild game is also a source of alpha-gal. This includes everything from venison to squirrel.

Several food additives come from animals and may cause a reaction. These include gelatin, glycerin, magnesium stearate, and bovine extract. As a result, you should check ingredient labels. Some prescribed medications and medical treatments may also cause a reaction. These may include heparin, antivenoms, certain chemotherapy drugs, and even heart valves derived from pigs or cows. Always ask if the prescribed medication or suggested treatment causes a reaction for those living with alpha-gal.



While it may seem like there are a lot of foods people cannot eat when they have alpha-gal, there are still many options that can be a part of a balanced diet. These foods include poultry (chicken, turkey, duck, or quail), seafood (fish, shellfish), eggs, beans, nuts and seeds, grains, vegetables, and fruits. Depending on the severity of the condition, some people may still be able to have dairy. Those with a more serious form of alpha-gal may not be able to tolerate dairy at all.

Those living with alpha-gal may have concerns about getting enough protein in their diet. Luckily, there are high-protein foods that do not contain alpha-gal. To ensure enough protein throughout the day, look to add poultry, nuts, seeds, whole grains, beans, seafood, and shellfish to meals and snacks. Cheese, milk, cottage cheese, and yogurt also add protein to the diet for those who can still tolerate dairy.

As individuals with alpha-gal tend to have different tolerance levels to meat products, dairy, and other animal byproducts, individuals should work with a health-care provider, such as a registered dietitian, to find a diet that works for them and meets their personal nutrition needs.

Source: Heather Norman-Burgdolf, Extension specialist for food and nutrition
Reference: Alpha-gal Syndrome. (2023). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/alpha-gal/index.html>

Cleaning Your Glass Cooktop

It is important to clean appliances regularly to keep them functioning properly. This especially holds true for ceramic or glass-top cooking surfaces. Before cleaning, check the user manual for any instructions. If the manual gives specific instructions for your unit, use those first, including anything not to do.

Follow the steps below to clean a glass cooktop.

1. Let the surface cool. You don't want to spray any type of cleaner on the glass while it is still

hot. This can cause the glass to pit.

2. Mix a cleaning solution or use a commercial glass cooktop cleaner. To mix your own, combine one cup of hot water and one cup of distilled white vinegar in a spray bottle. Add a small amount of liquid dish soap if desired. Dish soap will help cut through any grease. Shake to mix thoroughly. If you choose to use a commercial cleaner, make sure it is nonabrasive and suitable for glass or ceramic cooktops. Standard glass cleaner with ammonia is not recommended.

3. Spray your cooktop evenly with the vinegar solution or apply a commercial cleaner as directed. Allow the cleaner to sit for a couple of minutes then wipe away using a nonabrasive sponge or cloth. Do not use a scouring pad, steel wool, or scrub brush as these could damage the surface.

4. Rinse away the cleaner by wiping with a damp cloth or sponge. You may have to repeat a few times in order to remove all the residue. Dry the surface using a microfiber cloth. Microfiber cloths work better than paper towels or cloth rags, which can leave streaks and lint.

5. For tough messes like burned-on food, spray the area with vinegar and sprinkle with baking soda to create a bubbling or foaming action. Cover with a hot, damp, microfiber towel. Let sit for 15 minutes to soften the food. Remove the towel and scrub with a sponge. If needed, use a thin, plastic scraper to remove the food in layers. Repeat as needed then rinse and dry as described above.

Make a habit of wiping down your cooktop after each use with a soft microfiber cloth. This will prevent any grease buildup and scratches. Promptly clean any spills. Do not let burned food accumulate on the surface as this can lead to fires. Routine cleaning will keep your stovetop functioning properly and looking nice.

Find more information at your local Extension office.

Reference: <https://www.thespruce.com/smoothtop-electric-cooktop-care-1908592>
Source: Annhall Norris, food preservation and food safety Extension specialist

Upcoming Classes & Activities

Homemaker Leader Trainings

Let's Play Pickleball will be taught on **April 30, 10:00 a.m.** Pickleball is America's fastest growing sport that all ages and skill levels can play. It is an easy, affordable, fun, and social game that combines features of badminton, ping-pong, and tennis. Learn the rules of the game and how it can enhance physical, mental, and social health in this lesson taught by Caldwell County FCS Agent Ashley Board.



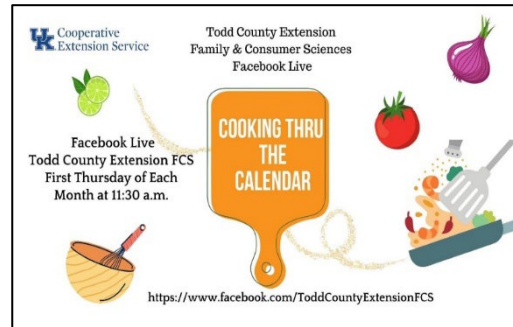
Health

Literacy for the Win will be mailed to everyone with the June newsletter.

Cooking Thru the Calendar

Facebook live demonstrations will be on the first Thursday of each month at 11:30 a.m. Upcoming dates include: **Thursday, May 2, Thursday, June 6, and Wednesday, July 3** (change due to holiday). You can watch live or the recordings on the Todd Co. Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ToddCountyExtensionFCS>.

Recipe calendars are available at the Todd County Extension Office, 240 Pond River Road, Elkton, KY.



Area Cultural Arts Display Winners

Congratulations to Stacey Young and Gayla Boelens on their winning entries at the Pennyryle Area Homemaker Cultural Arts Display. They will both be representing Todd County at the State Cultural Arts contest.



Todd County Homemakers Council

Todd County Homemakers Council will meet Monday, April 22, 5:00 p.m. at the Todd County Extension Office.

Food Preservation Classes

I will be offering food preservation classes starting soon. During each class, we will cover the Basics of Canning and have a hands-on canning lesson. Each class has a \$5.00 fee per person. To pre-register, contact the Todd County Extension Office at 270-265-5659 (pre-register at least one week in advance, minimum of 5 people per class, max 20).

April 25- Jams

May 16 – Pickles

June 18 – Vegetables (note: date change)

July 16 – Salsa




FOOD PRESERVATION Workshops

Learn basics of boiling water and pressure canning.



April 25 – Jams
May 16 – Pickles
June 18 – Vegetables
July 16 – Salsa

5:00 p.m.
Todd County Extension Office
240 Pond River Road, Elkton
\$5.00 per class

Pre-register by contacting the Extension Office at 270-265-5659
 Limit 20 Adults Per Class. Minimum 5.



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 University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky's State or Cooperating Agencies, are equal opportunity providers.
 Disabilities acknowledged with prior notification.

Food As Health Series

I will be offering 4 classes related to Food as Health: *Food as Health on a Budget*, *Food as Health for Heart Disease*, *Food as Health for Hypertension*, and *Food as Health for Diabetes*. Each class will have a healthy meal provided and some of the classes will be hands-on food preparation. Pre-registration is required so I know how much food to prepare. You may sign up for one or more of the classes. Hope you will join me to learn more about using food for health.





May 21, 5:00 p.m. - Food as Health on a Budget
 Learn about the relationship between the foods we eat and our overall health along with tips and tricks to save money and prevent food waste while making nutritious choices.
 Pre-register by May 14.

June 3, 5:00 p.m. - Food as Health for Heart Disease
 Learn more about heart disease, what role food plays in heart disease, and how to make healthy choices for prevention and management.
 Pre-register by May 28.

June 24, 5:00 p.m. - Food as Health for Hypertension
 Learn what blood pressure is, the basics of high blood pressure, and explore how nutritious food choices play a role.
 Pre-register by June 17.

June 27, 5:00 p.m. - Food as Health for Diabetes
 Learn about the basics of diabetes and explore how nutritious food choices play a role.
 Pre-register by June 20.

Join me for one or more of these FREE classes where we will explore how our food choices affect our health (geared toward adults). A healthy meal will be provided at each class. For more information or to pre-register, call 270-265-5659.

Location: Todd County Extension Office
240 Pond River Road, Elkton, KY



Roasted Potatoes from Spice Lesson

This is the Roasted Potato recipe we tried at the Savor the Flavor lesson. Hope you enjoy!

Spicy Roasted Potatoes (serves 6)

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

- 4 russet potatoes (about 2 lb.), unpeeled, cut into medium-sized chunks
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Mix spices together.
3. Toss cut potatoes in the olive oil and spice mixture.
4. Bake for 15 minutes.
5. Remove from oven, and turn potatoes with spatula.
6. Return to oven for another 15 minutes.
7. Remove from oven and serve.

Nutritional analysis:

230 calories, 12g fat, 1.5 g sat fat, 90 mg sodium, 28 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 1 g sugar, 3 g protein

Happy Spring!

Jill Harris

Jill Harris
County Extension Agent for
Family & Consumer Sciences

