American Latex Allergy Association

Is there life beyond latex allergy?

Answered by
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.

Only you can answer that question. Like other chronic illnesses latex allergy can present significant challenges and restrictions to one?s life. Unlike other illnesses, however, the unique characteristics of this disease may cause stressful reactions not often encountered with other chronic diseases. How this illness affects you and how you are able to cope with its daily challenges can have important consequences for the quality of your life. Perhaps you have already encountered some of these problems?feelings of betrayal by your body; feeling misunderstood by people close to you, the physician who doubts the credibility of your illness; how to cope with your feelings when a definitive diagnosis cannot be established. You may feel that the constant vigilance to protect yourself from unforeseen triggers has changed the type of person you once were and shrunk the dimensions of your world. You may even find it increasingly difficult and potentially dangerous to encounter new situations making you more anxious than you have ever been.

Living with an illness of such unusual characteristics may indeed be a formidable challenge; however, people often underestimate their capacity for creative adaptation. The following are some suggestions that may help you find a way to reconnect with life:

- Remember, you are not your disease. Your work, even your life may change, but your inner core has not.
- Maintain social contacts?with spouse, family, children, friends. Make an effort to sustain your usual interest in others and in life events.
- Include physical exercise in your life?there is no better time to start than now. Even better, walk and talk with a friend.
- Keep a personal journal?log your symptoms and daily emotions, both good and bad. Try to write at least one positive thought or affirmation each day?what makes life worth living?
- Start a new hobby or project.
- Educate yourself?learn about your illness?read, ask questions, use Internet Resources. Try to maintain balance in question and answers.
- Seek the support of others in a similar situation. Attend A.L.E.R.T., Inc. meetings.
- Make an effort to take control of your life. Be creative in how you do this. For some individuals psychotherapy is productive; others may try a course; perhaps karate or self-defense. The options are limited only by your imagination.
- Expand your spiritual horizons if this is meaningful to you. Draw on all the supports of your environment.
- Read?about you illness, about what makes life worth living, about the experiences of others who have been down similar paths.

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