

COMPLAINT NUMBER	19/226
COMPLAINANT	D Ryan
ADVERTISER	House of Health
ADVERTISEMENT	House of Health, Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	9 July 2019
OUTCOME	Settled – advertisement removed

Advertisement: The House of Health website advertisement, www.houseofhealth.co.nz, promoting food allergy blood testing. The advertisement says the IgG (Immunoglobulin G) testing can assess reactions to 96 foods.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled

Complainant, D Ryan, said: House of Health is selling a service for food allergy testing. They are likely breaking the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code, Principle 2, Rule 2(a) from their health claims and incorrect science. There is no evidence of any effectiveness for the IgG Blood Test and their explanation on how IgG antibodies are linked to food problems is wrong.

They say their IgG Blood Test can "Assesses reactions to 96 foods (plus extras if required). Can also test herbs & spices", "...each has its own advantages", "The IgG food allergy test is useful", "... in many cases is indicative of intestinal hyperpermeability, usually as a result of a digestive problem, such as SiBO"

"Levels of IgG (Immunoglobulin G) antibodies to specific foods are measured in blood as a measure of immune reactivity to the food in question.", "Excess antigen may saturate the macrophages capacity resulting in the prolonged circulation of complexes and their deposition into the body tissues. Depending on which tissues are involved, it is thought that these complexes may be implicated in many different conditions/symptoms"

<https://www.houseofhealth.co.nz/services/functional-tests/food-allergy-testing/>

"It may be indicated if the symptom history suggests possible involvement of food intolerances."

"...laboratory analysing the blood samples, report that IgG4 tests have been utilised in research settings as a tool for a guided elimination diet in patients with food-related complaints."

<https://www.houseofhealth.co.nz/product/food-allergy-tests/>

"We also offer a comprehensive medical blood test that is sent to a laboratory in the United States for IgE and IgG antibodies to at least 96 different foods."

"Research has confirmed a connection between IgG or delayed allergy and inflammatory bowel conditions such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome. IgG antibodies can be measured to identify the specific foods implicated."

<https://www.houseofhealth.co.nz/allergies-2/>

Science Based Medicine has two great articles which go through the peer-reviewed research and what the experts say.

They concluded:

"At present, there are no reliable and validated clinical tests for the diagnosis of food intolerance. While intolerances are non-immune by definition, IgG testing is actively promoted for diagnosis, and to guide management. These tests lack both a sound scientific rationale and evidence of effectiveness. The lack of correlation between results and actual symptoms, and the risks resulting from unnecessary food avoidance, escalate the potential for harm from this test. Further, there is no published clinical evidence to support the use of IgG tests to determine the need for vitamins or supplements. In light of the lack of clinical relevance, and the potential for harm resulting from their use, allergy and immunology organizations worldwide advise against the use of IgG testing for food intolerance."

<https://sciencebasedmedicine.org/igg-food-intolerance-tests-what-does-the-science-say/>
<https://sciencebasedmedicine.org/igg-food-intolerance-tests-continue-to-mislead-consumers-into-unnecessary-dietary-restrictions/>

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(a);

The Chair noted the Complainant's concerns the Advertiser's website contained unsubstantiated therapeutic claims about food allergy blood testing, which were misleading.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Advertiser contacted the Advertising Standards Authority and confirmed the advertisement page had been removed from its website.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in removing the advertisement, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled – advertisement removed**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.