

pills, and poor diets, many people's normal intestinal flora becomes imbalanced, and this ubiquitous, ever-present yeast proliferates. Cravings for sweets and starches intensify the situation.

Candida is just as timely and important now as it was in the mid-1980s, when William Crook, a medical doctor from Tennessee, wrote *The Yeast Connection Handbook* (Professional Books, 1999). Dr. Crook is well known for his mainstream research and documentation in the area of candidiasis (the syndrome caused by an overgrowth of candida), and has written many books on the subject.

Dr. Crook expanded the groundbreaking work of another doctor, Orian Truss, whose book *The Missing Diagnosis* ([www.missingdiagnosis.com](http://www.missingdiagnosis.com)) identified candida yeast and its links to many diseases. When I first read *The Missing Diagnosis*, I was stunned when I read the case histories, particularly those concerning women. I nearly cried when I read how similar their symptoms were to my own and to many of the women that we treated in a clinical setting. Now there are many popular books available on the subject, and yeast-eradication kits and supplements are readily available in health-food stores.

Over many years, I've seen the benefit of treating yeast in almost every single patient, and I've observed that this condition is almost always correctable. Candida albicans yeast can affect either sex at any age, including infancy. It appears to be more prevalent in women—probably due to the nature of their delicate endocrine systems—but many men suffer from it as well. In adults, this syndrome (and its inherent imbalances), is almost always diagnosed as a mental problem. The patient is usually told that it's "all in your head" and is referred for psychotherapy. But the rapid disappearance of all symptoms when the yeast is treated illustrates the capacity of this fungus to be part of many serious imbalances.

Because candida albicans is fed on starches and sugars,

it rapidly proliferates. An overgrowth of candidiasis can and does recur. Two common symptoms associated with candida are fatigue and sugar cravings. Once the overgrowth of candida is under control, these sugar cravings diminish. Candida can cause a myriad of symptoms such as gas, bloating, weight gain, digestive disorders, headaches, fatigue, poor memory, mental confusion, learning difficulties, irritability, depression, respiratory ailments, yeast infections, bladder problems, psoriasis, acne, low libido, irregular menses, hormone imbalances, toenail fungus, arthritis, and autism. It can even be involved in such serious illnesses as cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue syndrome, lupus, and Alzheimer's disease. I would suggest that if you've been diagnosed with one of these labeled diseases, you seek assistance in eradicating chronic candidiasis immediately.

Although there appears to be plenty of evidence to substantiate the existence of candidiasis, traditional mainstream medicine rarely addresses it. Many medical doctors rule out the possibility of candida because its presence isn't always revealed in blood tests or stool cultures, and exists within every human being. But we're aware that fungus is prevalent in epidemic proportions, particularly in North America. Just look at all of the commercials on TV for over-the-counter preparations for toenail fungus, psoriasis, dandruff, anal itching, and vaginal yeast infections. This is not a mystery—it's all about candida albicans and its important link to these seemingly small but irritating problems. I suggest that you locate a skilled medical doctor, naturopathic physician, or holistic practitioner who is familiar with candida and can help you. But keep in mind that unless candida is eradicated *on the inside*, topical skin preparations are only a temporary part of the solution. This reminds me of a classic case I once saw.

### Food Allergies and Addictions

Many people are addicted to sugar. I've actually had people break down and cry in front of me when I suggested that for a short period of time, they use an alternative to sugar just to break the cycle. I've found that people crave sugar when they don't consume enough protein. This is particularly true in the case of vegetarians who, unless they're very careful and are aware of protein combinations, tend to consume vast amounts of starch and sugar. (I will further discuss the specific challenges and concerns vegetarians face in Chapter 11.)

When people consume sugar, the pancreas—an organ located just beneath the stomach and responsible for the regulation of blood sugar—releases insulin. When sugar enters the bloodstream, it can trigger the desire in some people for wanting more and more sugar—almost as if the mechanism can't be turned off. A lot of people who desire sugar have widespread candidiasis. When candida is under control, one of the positive benefits is that the sugar cravings subside. Imagine being able to pass a bakery or a candy store without being the slightest bit tempted!

Obese people can identify with the overwhelming power of food addictions. Compulsive eaters continue to consume foods to which they're addicted many times a day. These people, like the drug addict or the alcoholic, have no idea that their daily food cravings are based on a physiological need to prevent the withdrawal symptoms related to their food allergies. The solution for them is to stop consuming the foods that they eat every single day and eat heartily from all the foods they don't eat on a daily basis—until their system has ceased to respond negatively and the immune system is given a chance to recover.

People often ask me how I manage my own cravings. Like many of you, way back in the distant past I was addicted to chocolate chip cookies, bread, and coffee. Chocolate chip

cookies would almost seem to call out to me from the freezer to come over, thaw them out, and eat them by the handful. But then, I had the early warning signs of what I thought was a serious illness. It turned out that I had rampant candidiasis and its inherent sweet cravings. I also found out that I was allergic or sensitive to all of the substances that I continually consumed. In environmental medicine, this is what is termed the *addictive/allergic response*, meaning that food-sensitive people can actually crave the foods to which they're allergic. I'll describe this surprising response in detail in the next chapter.

### Food Allergies and Immune Reactions

When people have food sensitivities, their body recognizes these substances as foreign invaders. The body reacts to an offending food the same way it reacts to a cold, virus, infection, or bee sting. When someone is stung by a bee, the body's response is to swell up and retain fluid, because the bee's venom is seen as an assailant. Similarly, as soon as a person ingests a food that their body considers an unwelcome attacker, their immune system mobilizes *histamine*, and the person swells up or a part of the body may become inflamed as a result of this *histamine reaction*. Histamine is a substance that's released by the immune system to protect the body and heart from foreign invaders or allergic or toxic substances.

The key is to identify the foods that your body considers foreign invaders, eliminate such foods for a short period of time, let the immune system calm down, and stop initiating histamine reactions. There will almost always be an improvement in symptoms by avoiding the common foods to which you're allergic. After you discover your food sensitivities, how are you going to manage? Guess what? You get to eat other foods more heartily!