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DISCLAIMER

By providing the information contained herein, we are not diagnosing, treating, curing, mitigating, or preventing any type of disease or medical condition. Before beginning any type of natural, integrative or conventional treatment regimen, it is advisable to seek the advice of a licensed healthcare professional. This is not intended as medical advice. This is how I cleanse myself. Do not do it while breastfeeding!

15 Main Signs and Symptoms You May Have Parasites

Parasites are organisms that live on or inside a host, deriving nutrients at the host's expense and often causing a range of health issues. As a Naturopath, educating my patients about the signs of parasitic infections can lead to early diagnosis and effective treatment.

Here are the 15 main signs and symptoms that you may have parasites.

1. Digestive Issues

Symptoms:

Diarrhea, constipation, gas, bloating, and persistent stomach pain.

Explanation:

Parasites can wreak havoc on your digestive system, leading to chronic gastrointestinal problems. For instance, *Giardia lamblia* attaches to the small intestine, causing inflammation that disrupts digestion and nutrient absorption, resulting in symptoms like diarrhea and bloating. Additionally, the toxins released by parasites can cause irritation and damage to the intestinal lining, leading to pain and discomfort. These symptoms can easily be mistaken for other gastrointestinal disorders, making it essential to consider parasitic infections as a potential cause.

2. Unexplained Weight Loss

Symptoms:

Significant weight loss despite eating normally or more than usual.

Explanation:

Parasites consume nutrients from the host, leading to unexplained weight loss. Tapeworms, for example, can grow to several meters long in the intestines, absorbing significant amounts of nutrients that are meant for the host. This nutrient theft results in the host losing weight rapidly, despite normal or increased food intake. If a patient is experiencing sudden and unexplained weight loss, a parasitic infection should be considered as a potential cause.

3. Fatigue and Weakness

Symptoms:

Chronic fatigue, weakness, and general malaise.

Explanation:

Parasites can drain the body of essential nutrients, leading to fatigue and weakness. Hookworms, for example, feed on the host's blood, causing iron deficiency anemia. This anemia can result in persistent fatigue, weakness, and a general feeling of malaise. The body's efforts to fight off the infection also consume energy, contributing to chronic tiredness. Patients experiencing these symptoms should be evaluated for possible parasitic infections.

4. Skin Problems

Symptoms:

Rashes, itching, eczema, hives, and other dermatological issues.

Explanation:

Skin issues can indicate a parasitic infection. Parasites like scabies mites burrow into the skin, causing intense itching and rashes. Additionally, parasites can release toxins that trigger allergic reactions, manifesting as eczema, hives, or other dermatological problems. Persistent skin issues that do not respond to conventional treatments should prompt an investigation into possible parasitic causes.

5. Mood and Behavioral Changes

Symptoms:

Anxiety, depression, mood swings, and irritability.

Explanation:

Parasites can affect mental health by disrupting neurotransmitter balance and causing systemic inflammation. For example, *Toxoplasma gondii* has been linked to changes in brain chemistry, potentially leading to mood disorders such as anxiety and depression. Chronic stress from persistent parasitic infections can also contribute to mood swings and irritability. Patients with unexplained changes in mental health should be evaluated for parasitic infections.

6. Joint and Muscle Pain

Symptoms:

Aching muscles, joint pain, and inflammation.

Explanation:

Parasitic infections can cause joint and muscle pain through direct invasion of tissues or by triggering inflammatory responses. *Trichinella spiralis*, for instance, invades muscle tissue, causing significant pain and discomfort. The immune system's response to the presence of parasites can also lead to widespread inflammation, mimicking conditions like arthritis or fibromyalgia. Persistent or unexplained musculoskeletal pain warrants further investigation for parasitic causes.

7. Sleep Disturbances

Symptoms:

Insomnia, restless sleep, teeth grinding, and night sweats.

Explanation:

Parasites can interfere with sleep through various mechanisms. Nocturnal itching caused by pinworms can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to insomnia and restless nights. The stress and discomfort associated with chronic parasitic infections can also affect sleep quality. Additionally, teeth grinding (bruxism) has been associated with parasitic

infections, possibly due to nervous system responses to the parasites. Patients with ongoing sleep disturbances should be evaluated for potential parasitic infections.

8. Allergies and Sensitivities

Symptoms:

Increased sensitivity to foods, chemicals, and environmental factors.

Explanation:

Parasites can compromise the immune system, making the body more susceptible to allergies and sensitivities. They can also cause damage to the gut lining, leading to leaky gut syndrome, which allows undigested food particles to enter the bloodstream and trigger allergic reactions. This increased reactivity can manifest as new or worsening sensitivities to foods, chemicals, and other environmental factors. If a patient experiences a sudden onset of allergies or sensitivities, a parasitic infection should be considered.

9. Anemia

Symptoms:

Fatigue, pallor, shortness of breath, and dizziness.

Explanation:

Anemia is a common consequence of parasitic infections, particularly those involving blood-sucking parasites like hookworms. These parasites deplete the host's iron stores, leading to iron deficiency anemia. Symptoms such as fatigue, pallor, shortness of breath, and dizziness are typical of anemia and should prompt an evaluation for parasitic causes if iron supplementation alone does not resolve the issue.

10. Persistent Flu-like Symptoms

Symptoms:

Fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, and general malaise.

Explanation:

Some parasitic infections can cause chronic, flu-like symptoms due to the body's ongoing immune response. For example, malaria, caused by Plasmodium parasites, presents with recurrent fever and chills. Similarly, parasites that migrate through various tissues can

cause systemic inflammation, resulting in symptoms that mimic the flu. Persistent or recurring flu-like symptoms should prompt further investigation for potential parasitic infections.

11. Cognitive Impairment

Symptoms:

Memory problems, difficulty concentrating, and brain fog.

Explanation:

Parasites can affect cognitive function by causing inflammation and disrupting nutrient absorption, which in turn affects brain health. For instance, certain parasites release neurotoxins that can impair cognitive functions, leading to memory problems, difficulty concentrating, and brain fog. If a patient reports unexplained cognitive issues, it may be worthwhile to investigate parasitic infections as a potential underlying cause.

12. Changes in Appetite

Symptoms:

Increased or decreased appetite, food cravings.

Explanation:

Parasites can alter appetite and eating behaviors. Some parasites release chemicals that interfere with the host's hormonal signals, leading to increased or decreased appetite. For example, a tapeworm infection might cause cravings for certain foods as the body attempts to balance nutrient deficiencies caused by the parasite. Sudden or unexplained changes in appetite should be evaluated for possible parasitic infections.

13. Immune System Dysfunction

Symptoms:

Frequent infections, slow recovery from illness, and chronic inflammation.

Explanation:

Parasites can weaken the immune system, making the host more susceptible to infections and slower to recover from illnesses. They can also cause chronic inflammation, which further impairs immune function. Frequent infections or prolonged

recovery times, along with signs of chronic inflammation, should prompt a consideration of parasitic infections.

14. Reproductive Issues

Symptoms:

Menstrual irregularities, infertility, and pelvic pain.

Explanation:

Some parasitic infections can affect the reproductive system, leading to menstrual irregularities, infertility, and pelvic pain. For instance, *Trichomonas vaginalis* is a parasite that can cause reproductive tract infections in women, leading to pelvic pain and other symptoms. If a patient experiences unexplained reproductive issues, it may be necessary to evaluate for parasitic infections.

15. Respiratory Problems

Symptoms:

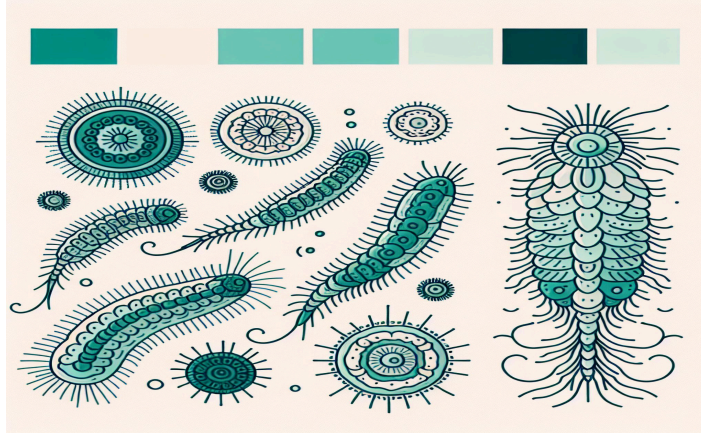
Chronic cough, shortness of breath, and wheezing.

Explanation:

Certain parasites can invade the respiratory system, causing symptoms like chronic cough, shortness of breath, and wheezing. For example, the larvae of *Ascaris lumbricoides* can migrate to the lungs, causing respiratory symptoms. These issues can be mistaken for other respiratory conditions, so it's important to consider parasitic infections when diagnosing persistent respiratory problems.

Conclusion

Recognizing the signs of a parasitic infection is crucial for timely diagnosis and treatment. If you or your patients experience any of these symptoms persistently or in combination, seeking professional advice is essential. Early detection and treatment can prevent complications and improve overall health. As a Naturopath, educating patients about these signs can lead to better health outcomes and a higher quality of life.



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