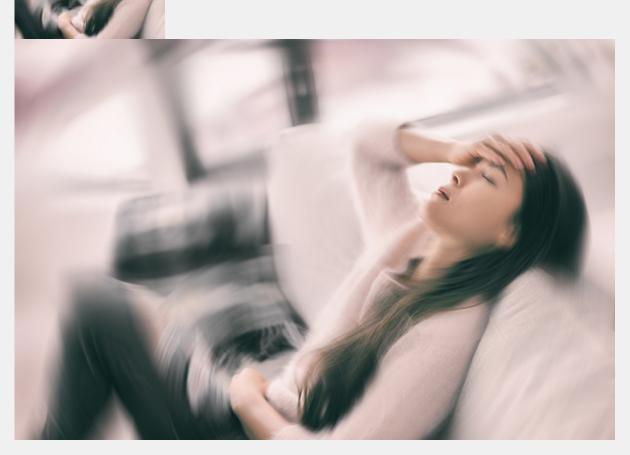# Leyla Weighs In: What symptoms can tell us

In my experience, the development of a symptom(s) is your body trying to tell you something. Your approach to it may be one of curiosity. This is good because curiosity ushers in information. For example, in the event of a stomach ache, you may question what you ate shortly before the discomfort presented itself. The same with other new onset gastrointestinal woes like bloating, gas, and diarrhea. The duration, while acute, is typically short—a few days in most cases.

When symptoms are long-lasting—more than two weeks and going into months—naturally they evoke concern, even worry, and rightfully so.

It still pays to be curious. Because if you're suffering with fatigue, body aches, joint pain, headache, swelling, chronic GI issues and/or changes in mood, it's worth a full investigation of how you nourish yourself, sleep, move, relate to others, your toxic exposures, a review of your current medications and your tolerance for stress—especially if it's chronic (the stress as well as your symptoms!). In my opinion, this is a good place to start.

If much of the food you eat comes out of a package that has a list of gobbledygook ingredients, ask yourself, "Hmmm…what does my body do with all that?" Then ask

yourself if you would feed it to your pet. Or would Fido get sick?

At the expense of sounding trite, this isn't rocket science. Why do we *not* treat ourselves with the same care? "But… I like having cheese Danish for breakfast!" or, "I can't stop eating pretzels or (insert the 'can't live without' food here)". In that case, go ahead and eat that chili dog, just don't forget to take your Pepcid. Larry the Cable Guy said you could.

I'm reminded of a favorite quote of mine from Dave Ramsey: "Adults do the right thing. Children do what *feels* good."

And no doubt, your doctor has their prescription pad ready to help you quash those pesky symptoms your *precious miracle of a body* is using to communicate with you.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN

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