



# THE BLOOD TEST THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

*A life-long seafood hater finds out the real reason for her food aversion.*

By Nicole Catanese on May 12, 2014

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Recently, I went for a vitamin IV and some blood work at the hands of John Salerno, MD, a physician and founder of **The Salerno Center** in New York City. Along with checking levels of the basic nutrient roster (vitamin B, C, iron, etc.), he did a thorough look at what was going on in my body. A week later, Dr. Salerno called me with my results and added a shocker statment to the end of our convo: "And you're allergic to shellfish," he said. Instead of being upset, I gasped with joy—even though shellfish only encompass a small grouping of fish, my aversion to all kinds suddenly made sense. The only reason that I didn't jump up and down was because I happened to be on a fishing boat when I received the call (Yes, note the irony. I was laying, not fishing like the rest of the crew.)

My entire life—the countless explanations, meal diversions and replacements, as well as holding my head up high at the neverending disbelief—had all been validated. And I wondered, 'Why on earth had I waited so long to find this out?' The thought of now, after a simple and quick blood test, being able to quickly quip 'Sorry, I'm allergic!' to a shrimp plate at a party or a group sushi dinner, instead of hanging my head in anti-fish shame is life-changing.

And it turns out, linking a hate for a food and a legitimate allergy is not that uncommon. "It is very possible to have such a reaction," says Dr. Salerno. "The human body can be very intuitive in regards to knowing what it may be allergic to." And besides having an aversion, Dr. Salerno says that when people have an allergy, "it can manifest in several different ways—it can present itself as bloating, chronic malaise or fatigue, weight gain, brain fog, and mood changes and depression," he explains. "The main mechanism behind the physiology is because antibodies are produced against the allergic foods, which create an inflammatory response."

And so, you will find me *happily* not eating crabs. Or shrimp. (Or salmon, tuna, or sushi for that matter) and so on because (wait for it...): I'm *allergic*.