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Chiropractic and Immunity

It is vital for your health that your immune system and inflammation responses are well balanced. The immune system not only destroys foreign tissue but also unwanted parts of our own tissues. Inflammation is your body's effort to deal with damaged tissue and begin repair. Upset to these systems can lead to your body causing havoc on itself. Your body's lack of ability to properly adapt to the changing environment is a large component to seasonal allergies. After all, everyone breathes the same ragweed pollen, yet everyone does not have seasonal allergies.

A healthy spine is essential for a healthy nerve system, which coordinates ALL of the other systems in your body. Only recently have researchers uncovered the molecular connections between the nerve system, the immune system, and inflammation. As chiropractors, we have a direct influence over the nervous system. We now know through research that chiropractic care has beneficial effects on immunoglobulins, B-lymphocytes (white blood cells), pulmonary function and other immune system processes. Besides the growing research, there are countless case studies of patients (including myself) who have seen drastic improvements in their allergies from regular chiropractic care and a balanced immune system.

-Peter J. Braglia, DC

In today's world we have created such a clean environment (this notion is called the "hygiene hypothesis") that now the baby doesn't get the normal exposure that would switch the immune system to Th1 (cell mediated immunity) which means baby stays in type 2 (humoral immunity.) If the allergen shows up while the baby is in type 2, the immune system will make an antibody called IgE, or immunoglobulin E, which creates an allergic response to the allergen. If the allergen shows up when the baby's in type 1—after having experienced minor infections—then the immune system makes an antibody called IgG, Immunoglobulin G, and the child will not be allergic to the allergen.

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Therefore, it's really important to recognize that in order for the immune system to be healthy the baby should get exposed to all kinds of things, especially through breastfeeding, and be inoculated with bacteria. This would switch the immune system to type 1 and make a normal antibody response.

-Bruce Lipton, PhD *Pathways* issue 52

Why Are We So Allergic Now?

The great Renaissance physician Paracelsus famously said that every substance, including our usual food and drink, that enters us acts as a poison which we must digest and transform in order to make it compatible with our inner environment. Thus, the task of our digestive system is to process all our food and drink to be compatible with our individual human ecosystem, and to remove all foreignness— i.e. all antigenicity—from everything entering our body. Any entering substance which our digestive system fails to divest of its foreign antigenicity then becomes a target for our immune system to challenge. Our immune system is really like a backup digestive system that extends throughout our body in our blood.

The task of the humoral branch of the immune system is to create specific antibodies which "tag," and to some extent neutralize, specific foreign antigens within us as a preliminary step to the more thorough processing of foreign antigens by the cellular branch. The cellular, or cell-mediated, immune system (or, approximately, the Th1 function) primarily destroys, digests, and expels foreign antigens from the body using cells found in the thymus, tonsils, adenoids, spleen, lymph nodes, and lymph system.

These two functional branches of the immune system may be compared to the two functions in eating—tasting and recognizing the food on the one hand, and digesting the food and eliminating the food waste on the other. In the same way, the humoral, antibody-producing branch of the immune system tastes, recognizes, and remembers foreign antigens, and the cellular branch digests and eliminates the foreign antigens from the body. A growing number of scientists believe that the large increase in allergic and autoimmune diseases (which stimulate the humoral branch of the immune system) throughout America, Europe, Australia, and Japan, is caused by the lack of stimulation of the cellular branch due to the lack of acute inflammatory illnesses and discharges in childhood.

We need to identify what causes this shift in the function of

Photo Courtesy of Yarruta

the immune system causing allergies and autoimmune diseases in childhood to increase.

Two of the most obvious factors are the overuse of vaccines and antibiotics. A vaccination is like a straitjacket for the immune system, because it holds the system permanently (or until it wears off) on the humoral side in maintaining a certain level of antibodies. This "prevents" the illness, because it prevents our own cellular immune system from reacting to the virus or bacterium associated with that particular illness.

-Phil Incao, M.D, *Pathways* issue 52