

How Do Food Allergies & Sensitivities Develop?

A large part of the immune system resides in the lining of your gastrointestinal tract. It is termed GALT (gut associated lymph tissue). Normally the GALT is elegantly controlled - it is able to discern its actions towards harmful elements to your body (i.e. viruses, bacteria) versus harmless elements (i.e. food).

Individuals with healthy digestive tracts and immune systems do not mount an immune response against foods. However, in individuals whose digestion and immunity have been compromised this state of tolerance to foods becomes disrupted. A common problem today is "leaky gut" in which the gastrointestinal lining becomes hyper permeable to large molecules (food fragments) which cross the leaky gut wall. Picture a sieve with holes in it. This impairment can be a result of any number of contributing factors (i.e. antibiotic abuse, environmental toxins, genetic susceptibility, imbalanced bacterial flora, nutritional imbalances, infection, poor diet, stress, and or trauma). As a result, the immune system becomes over reactive, and a cascade of immunological events ensue, wherein the GALT begins to attack the food as though it were a threat. As part of the defense, antibodies are produced in efforts to neutralize and eliminate the antigen (e.g. food) from the body. These antigen-antibody immune complexes will circulate to any tissue or organ of the body and trigger an inflammatory reaction which leads to tissue damage. This overall impairment plays a contributing role to the pathogenesis of many conditions and diseases.

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