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GMO Effects on Asthma, Allergies and Eczema

by Dr. Mark Joachim, DC, FIAMA

Many crops of corn, soy, wheat, tomatoes, potatoes, dairy, papaya, peas, rice, rapeseed (a source of canola oil) and cotton have been genetically modified, and more are likely to come in the near future. With this growing prevalence of modified products, an increase in food allergies and sensitivities is likely as our bodies attempt to process materials they are not equipped to handle.

A GMO is an organism with genetic characteristics that have been altered in a laboratory. Foods are modified to make them resistant to insects, pests and weather, and allow them to grow faster, bigger and at a lower cost. The chemicals produced by these modifications are believed to be unsafe for human consumption, prompting a grassroots movement that convinced legislators in Connecticut to recently pass a law requiring food manufacturers to list GMO ingredients in their labels.

Seventy percent of the immune system originates in the gut, and an unhealthy gut that cannot process the items it is being fed will create an unhealthy person. Allergies, whether caused by food or environmental agents, rarely appear all of a sudden; they develop over time and can lead

to breathing difficulties, asthma and eczema.

The body eliminates toxins through urination, bowel movements, coughing, sneezing or perspiration. When it has trouble eliminating toxins, especially as a result of poor digestion, toxins begin to seep through the intestinal walls, causing a condition called leaky gut syndrome. These toxins will circulate the body until it finds a way to eliminate them.

When a person has a constant circulation of toxins, their inflammatory response is always active and the body is never allowed to heal. As a general rule, any medical condition with "itis" at the end indicates inflammation. Common ailments such as bronchitis or sinusitis indicate inflammation of that region. Some people suffer with these on a chronic basis.

The lungs and skin are elimination organs, and in Eastern philosophy, the skin is considered to be the third lung. Just like any other part of the body that is not functioning properly, the skin compensates when the lungs need help. Working harder, this extra effort to detoxify may be expressed as rashes, hives and eczema. Counter to what we usually attribute these symptoms to,

namely environmental irritations, from a holistic perspective, these rashes, hives or eczema usually result when internal toxins are trying to leave the body.

In the world of allopathic medicine, the progression from dermatitis (skin rash) to eczema to breathing problems is called the Atopic March, a condition that was reported in a *Science Daily* article titled "Why Eczema Often Leads to Asthma." The authors explain that when skin is damaged, a chemical is released which then circulates in the body causing another chemical reaction that elicits asthma-type symptoms. These findings suggest that early treatment of skin rashes and inhibition of the trigger substances might block asthma development in young patients with eczema.

Similarly, research findings by Raphael Kapan, Ph.D., a research professor of developmental biology and dermatology, suggest that patients that have damaged or defective skin can elicit a powerful immune response, causing the lungs to trigger a hypersensitivity characteristic of asthma.

The labeling of GMOs, better understanding of our food supply and increased awareness of the body's response to various foods is far from being of theoretical importance. Our health as individuals and as a society depends on improvement in all of these areas.

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